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ABSTRACT

The report provides background information on the educational needs of disabled South East Asian students and presents four papers from a meeting and workshop on the topic held respectively in March and June of 1985. A draft of an action plan advocated by meeting participants addresses ways to meet five major needs: (1) to obtain information on the number of South East Asian students needing special education services; (2) to assess limited English proficient students in their dominant language; (3) to identify, evaluate and educate students in linguistically appropriate ways; (4) to instruct students in linguistically and culturally appropriate ways; and (5) to advocate for students' and parents' needs at the local, state, and national level. Following the draft plan, three discussion papers from the workshop are presented. Te Dihn Huyhh begins with an examination of "Special Education for Vietnamese Students: Current Situation, Problems, and Issues." In "Indochinese Cross-Cultural Adjustment and Communication," Nguyen Dang Leim reviews the effects of the Indochinese people's traditions and psycho-religious forces on their ways of life and adjustment. Recommendations are offered to help Americans understand and deal with the cultural implications and an overview of customs and values in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam is appended. Next, Tron Huong Mai describes "Approaches for Identifying and Servicing Indochinese Handicapped Students," as instituted by the Montgomery County (Maryland) Public Schools. In a final paper, entitled "Evaluation-Assessment-Educational Planning for Indochinese Refugee Children in the School System," and delivered at the meeting preceding the workshop, Tam Dang Wei details steps in information gathering, evaluation, and placement. (CL)

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IDENTIFYING INSTRUCTING AND REHABILITATING SOUTH EAST ASIAN STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS AND COUNSELING THEIR PARENTS

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR SOUTH EAST ASIAN STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

During the 1970's and 1980's a large number of South East Asian refugees immigrated to the United States. Currently, it is estimated that as many as 700,000 refugees have resettled in the United States. Like all other immigrants, these individuals require many services to facilitate their transition and acculturation. The provision of these services is being hindered by the fact that the professionals who provide these services lack the proficiency in the South East Asian languages and literacy about the South East Asian culture necessary to provide these services in linguistically and culturally appropriate ways. This is clearly the case in education, a field in which there is only an insignificant number of counselors, educators, and psychologists who can provide the bilingual/bicultural services the many limited English proficient South East Asian students require.

The situation regarding South East Asian students with special needs is even less satisfactory. Currently, virtually no bilingual/bicultural special education services are being provided to South East Asian students. This unfortunate situation is due primarily to the fact that because there were no special education programs in South East Asia, there were no special educators among the immigrants who arrived here during the 1970's and 1980's. The result of this is that there are only two South East Asian school psychologists and one South East Asian special educator to either identify South East Asian

students who require special education or provide the bilingual/bicultural services these students require in the whole United States.

A modest beginning has been made towards improving this situation. Two universities, California State University, Long Beach and San Jose State University, have recently initiated pre-service training programs to prepare South East Asian bilingual/bicultural special educators. However the number of trainees these programs will produce is minimal in comparison to the need. Moreover, these programs are only preparing special educators who will work with students with special needs. There are still no programs to train bilingual/bicultural special educators for South East Asian students with other kinds of special needs, or bilingual/bicultural school psychologists, speech therapists, counselors paraprofessionals, and teacher assistants, etc. In addition to these pre-service training programs, the Special Education Resource Network (SERN) of the California State Department of Education has been funded to conduct in-service training for English speaking school personnel who work with South East Asian students. Again, the number of persons involved who receive their training is minimal in comparison to the number that require it.

In order to coordinate their efforts, improve their training, and stimulate the development of additional training sites in California and elsewhere, California State University, Long Beach , San Jose State University and SERN sponsored a meeting of professionals who work with South East Asian students with special needs which was held at the annual conference of the

National Association for Bilingual Education in 1985.

The participants at this conference agreed on the following recommendations:

1. A conference of all individuals with experience working with South East Asian students with special needs should be held in order to share information to identify the major obstacles which prevent South East Asian students with special needs from receiving appropriate special education services, to develop effective strategies for over coming these obstacles and to establish a network of concerned and experienced individuals.

2. Culturally and linguistically appropriate assessment procedures for identifying, educating and rehabilitating South East Asian students with special needs should be developed and disseminated.

3. Effective models for recruiting and training South East Asian professionals and paraprofessionals to work with South East Asian students with special needs should be developed and disseminated.

4. Appropriate methods and materials for training English speaking school personnel to take South East Asian cultural characteristics into consideration when they work with South East Asian students with special needs and their parents should be prepared and disseminated.

As a result of this conference a workshop was held to implement these suggestions.

DESCRIPTION OF THE WORKSHOP

The workshop was co-sponsored by California State University, Long Beach, San Jose State University, and SERN. Invited participants included representatives of the above organizations, and other organizations concerned with providing appropriate educational services to South East Asian students with special needs, and all South East Asian educators - special educators, counselors, psychologists, linguists, and speech and language specialists with experience working with South East Asian students with special needs.

The workshop was held from June 9 - June 12, 1985 .

Six participants prepared and presented working papers on some of the major issues related to the education of South East Asian students with special needs. The participants used these papers as a basis for discussion of these issues.

RESULTS

The major conclusion reached by the participants was that professionals involved in providing services to South East Asian students with special needs should prepare a master plan for the orderly and organized development of services for South East Asian students with special needs.

A draft of an action plan was prepared by the participants. This plan is included below.

I. A. Need: Information regarding the number of South East Asian students who need special education services is required for short term and long term planning for these students on the local, state and national level.

B. State of the art:

Except for a few localities this kind of information is nonexistent.

C. Goals and steps:

1. Identify a representative sample of school districts with high concentrations of South East Asian students.
2. Survey these school districts regarding the special education needs of their South East Asian students.
3. Extrapolate to the state and national level.

II. A. Need: It is necessary to assess limited English proficient South East Asian students in their dominant language.

B. State of the art:

Except for instruments for evaluating language proficiency there are no assessment instruments published in South East Asian languages.

C. Goals and steps:

1. Survey existing instruments and adaptations currently available. (advertise in publications of NEA, AFT, TESOL, CEC, NASP, APA, ASHA, etc.)
2. Review existing instruments.
3. Determine which English only instruments can be translated and adapted for use with South East Asian students.
4. Determine which new instruments should be developed.
5. Establish priorities.
6. Obtain funding for the development of culturally and linguistically appropriate assessment instruments.
7. Begin to develop instruments on a priority basis.

III. A. Need:

South East Asian students with special needs should be identified, evaluated and educated in culturally and linguistically appropriate ways. Counseling services for parents of South East Asian students with special needs should be culturally and linguistically appropriate. Because there are almost no psychologists or special educators who speak South East Asian languages there is a great need for personnel preparation programs that can train such bilingual professionals. Because the supply of such bilingual

professionals will not meet the demand it will be necessary to train a considerable number of bilingual paraprofessionals and to prepare English speaking professionals to work with them. Thus there is a need for both preservice and inservice training programs for bilingual professionals and paraprofessionals and English speaking professionals.

B. State of the art:

Preservice training programs for bilingual special educators are available at California State University, Long Beach and San Jose State University. There are no preservice training programs for bilingual school psychologists. Inservice training for English speaking professionals has been carried out by the California Special Education Resource Network and San Jose State University. Resources for training paraprofessionals include: Illinois State Resource System, NODAC, NAVAE training tapes, Dr. Tung Arlington's model and Dr. Liem's model.

C. Goals and steps:

1. In order to insure that sufficient trained personnel will be available for South East Asian students and their parents national preservice and inservice personnel preparation programs should be established in the areas of the greatest concentration of South East Asian immigrants. Six regional centers should be established in Orange

County California, San Francisco Bay Area: California, Houston: Texas, Chicago: Illinois, Washington, D.C. and the Oregon - Washington area.

2. Develop model training programs based on what is currently being done in such places as San Jose State University, California State University Long Beach and California Special Education Resource Network. Compilations of reading materials, training materials and resource people should be made available to these preservice and inservice training programs and other interested individuals.

3. Representative from the appropriate units of the Department of Education such as special education and OBEMLA should be informed of the work of the task force and invited to participate at future meetings.

4. Strategies for recruiting South East Asian students and qualifying them for preservice programs should be developed including career escalation programs to prepare paraprofessionals to enter preservice professional personnel preparation programs.

IV A. Need:

Limited English proficient South East Asian students with special needs should be instructed in linguistica-

lly and culturally appropriate ways. Therefore South East Asian language instructional material suitable for instructing South East Asian students with special needs should be available, as well as training programs for bilingual special educators and programs for parent training and community involvement.

B. State of the art:

1. There are virtually no instructional materials suitable for use with South East Asian students with special needs.
2. Four programs which provide training for special educators to work with LEP South East Asian students with special needs have been identified: California State University, Long Beach and San Jose State University prepare bilingual special educators; while the Illinois Resource Network provide inservice training for English speaking professionals.
3. There are numerous resources and models for parent training and community involvement. They include:

   - Project TOT - Sam Chan Los Angeles
   - State Department bilingual parent group
   - SERN parent unit
   - Concilio Estatal, parent advisory to state
   - Yerba Buena High School - how to form parent groups
   - Fiesta Educativa model workshops for parents

- NABE parent strand
- Amerasian foster parent support group
- Dr. Quan's parent involvement program Tallahassee
- Tung Tran, psychratrist, Washington, D.C. - working with parents
- Xuan Cauh Tran's paper on parent involvement
- NAVAE has tape for paraprofessionals
- Counseling Dr. Liem's video tapes on counseling

C. Goals and steps:

1. Initiate inservice and preservice training programs in the six areas listed above.
2. Obtain funding and develop instructional materials suitable for South East Asian students with special needs.
3. Compile and disseminate lists of materials suitable for use in parent training and community involvement programs.

V. A. Need:

The interests and needs of South East Asian students with special needs and their parents should be advocated at the local, state and especially national level. Efforts to develop adequate services for these students and their parents should be coordianted.

B. State of the art:

There is currently no group advocating for the needs of these students and their parents nor has there been any attempt to coordinate the development of services for these students and their parents prior to the formation of this task force.

C. Goals and steps:

1. Prepare a master plan for the orderly and coordinated development of services over a five year period.
2. Identify sources of funding.
3. These funds should be awarded to a consortium of interested agencies and organizations. San Jose State University should be the recepient of these funds with the understanding that other agencies and organizations would carry on various activities as subcontractors.

In addition to discussing the issues on the agenda and developing a draft master plan, the participants conducted an informal survey of the assessment procedures currently utilized by South East Asian professionals who are involved in identifying and evaluating South East Asian students. This informal survey of the assessment instruments currently available for identifying and evaluating South East Asian students with special needs indicated the following types of instruments are necessary.

South East Asian Language Proficiency - Oral

Informal instruments are currently in use in Los Angeles County, Chicago and San Diego (BEST Test). These instruments should be reviewed and evaluated for possible use on a national scale. The SOLOM could possibly be translated and adapted for use with South East Asian students.

South East Asian Language Proficiency - Written

Two instruments, the San Diego BEST and the Sacramento are available. Neither of these instruments are normed. They should be evaluated. If appropriate for use on a national scale they should be normed. It will be necessary to have instruments which evaluate both receptive and expressive proficiency.

Acculturation

No instruments are currently available.

Reading Skills

A diagnostic reading test in South East Asian language would be helpful. No instruments are currently available.

Math Skills

It should be possible to translate and adapt any of a number of English language math skills tests by modifying such things as the decimal point signs for division and fractions omitting the

American measurement system and providing students with more time to complete the questions.

Neurological Functioning

It would be sufficient to translate and adapt any of a number of English language instruments.

Gross Motor and Fine Motor Functioning

English language instruments can be adapted.

Auditory Perception

Because the sound systems of South East Asian language and English are so different it is necessary to develop an entirely new instrument. This instrument could be based on the model of the Goldman Fristoe Woodcock Test of Auditory Discrimination Test or subtest 18 of the Detroit Tests of Learning Aptitude.

Perceptual Motor

Translations of the Detroit, VMI and Bender Gestalt would be appropriate for use with South East Asian LEP students.

The Motor Free Visual Perception Test can be translated for use with South East Asian language speaking students.

Personality

Projective tests such as the Rorschach Ink Blots, the House

Tree Person, Family Kinetic Drawing and selected cards of the Thematic Apperception Test could be used but only with appropriate guidelines for interpreting students response from a South East Asian cultural perspective. South East Asian sentence completion tests with culturally appropriate items should be developed.

Intellectual Functioning

Intelligence tests which provide IQ scores are not appropriate for use with South East Asian students. Adaptive behavior inventories would be more relevant. However they need to be developed for South East Asian norms.

Speech and Language

There are no speech and languages tests available. It is therefore necessary to prepare developmental norms, and articulation and phonological norms. Assessment instruments for all areas of speech and language functioning are needed.

The participants established five committees which will assume responsibility for each of the five areas in the draft master plan and selected an executive committee.

The participants also prepared a list of individuals who should be invited to join the efforts of the task force. They also expressed a desire to include other interested individuals in the work of the task force who are not included in this list

of resource people.

The participants decided that the next meeting of the full task force should be held in southern California or some other area in order to facilitate the participation of other professionals concerned with South East Asian students with special needs and their families. The executive committee was empowered to meet at least once or twice during the interim to further the work of the task force. Mai Dao and Herbert Grossman were instructed to seek the financial support necessary to continue the work of the task force.

Before adjourning the participants expressed their appreciation to the organizations which sponsored the workshop and to the California State Department of Education - Office of Special Education for providing the funding and professional support necessary to carry it out.

The executive committee met on April 23, 1986 in order to review and implement the recommendations of the workshop. As a result of this meeting a three year plan was adopted. The five priority goals of this plan are:

1. Conduct a survey and compile a directory of resources available to South East Asian students with special needs. Separate directories will be developed for California, Texas, New York, and Florida.

2. Develop a model for parent training and community involvement in relation to the needs of South East Asian

students with special needs.

3. Develop a model for the preparations of South East Asian paraprofessionals who could assist in the identification, evaluation and instruction of South East Asian students with special needs and counseling their parents.

4. Dissemmate the model developed by San Jose State University to prepare English speaking professionals to work with South East Asian students with special needs.

5. Develop culturally and linguistically appropriate assessment instruments for South East Asian students with special needs.

Various individuals were assigned the task of preparing proposals to obtain funding for these five projects.

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SPECIAL EDUCATION FOR VIETNAMESE STUDENTS: CURRENT SITUATION, PROBLEMS, AND ISSUES

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SPECIAL EDUCATION FOR VIETNAMESE STUDENTS:
CURRENT SITUATION ,PROBLEMS,AND ISSUES.

N.B..The purpose of this paper is to provide a working document to generate ideas for discussion at the seminar. Therefore,it is not intended to be an in-depth study of"Special Education for Vietnamese students".On the other hand,certain problems and issues raised in this paper will be treated in details in other sessions of the seminar.

I. NEED ASSESSMENT . In discussing Special education for Vietnamese students,the first question that comes up to our mind is,no doubt,the following:" How many Vietnamese students are there who need special education ? " At present, there are no accurate figures available.What we have had so far are guesstimates from various agencies dealing with special education.This points to the need for a systematic survey of Vietnamese speaking students who need special education,both in California and all over the country.The students should be classified according such categories as:

- Learning disabled
- Socially and emotionally disturbed
- Mentally retarded
- Physically handicapped
- Gifted

and according to geographical distribution.The survey should also include agencies and programs dealing with Special Ed students whose primary language is Vietnamese. With this kind of information in hand we would be in a better position to plan appropriate and effective programs for Vietnamese speaking students who need Special education .

II.ASSESSMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS.

The second question,as a corollary to the first,is:"How are students assessed and identified as having special education needs? "

A. Assessment Instruments .The instruments now used to assess Vietnamese speaking students are those intended for native speakers of English.It is obvious that certain problems may arise in this situation:

1. Are the instruments free from linguistic and cultural biases?

Even normal children whose primary language is Vietnamese will experience difficulties in taking tests intended for native speakers of English,due to lack of English proficiency.Errors due to second language acquisition process may often be attributed to language delays and disorders.Consequently,a number of Vietnamese students identified as having language disorders or delays may simply be normal limited English proficient students.At present, there are no assessment intruments prepared in Vietnamese.

2. How are we to solve this problem? Several alternatives are worth considering:

a. Translation of these assessment instruments into Vietnamese for better comprehension by the students tested.

b.Preparation of entirely new instruments in English or Vietnamese to avoid linguistic and cultural problems mentioned above.

c. Adaptation of existing instruments to overcome linguistic and cultural biases..

It is the task of this seminar to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative and come to a judicious choice of solutions.

B.Special Education Personnel. Most(if not all) of the time the assessment instruments are administered by monolingual specialists who,more often than not,do not have the necessary knowledge of the linguistic and cultural equipment of the students taking the tests. There are now almost no credentialed Vietnamese teachers in Special education and very few credentialed bilingual teachers in English and Vietnamese.The scarcity of Bilingual teachers has prompted the California Teacher Credentialing Commission to pass a resolution in which it urged"the California Legislature to declare the need for bilingual teachers to have reached a state of emergency".

In order to have qualified bilingual special education personnel the following measures may be considered:

a)Training of(English-Vietnamese) bilingual special education teachers/specialists. In California there are now two IHE's engaged in the development of training programs for bilingual special education teachers for Vietnamese students.These are San Jose State University and California State University Long Beach. Since we have representatives from those two programs at this seminar,it is most appropriate to have them describe their programs and share with us the success as well as problems encountered .(Tuesday afternoon session will be reserved for this)

b) In-service Training for Monolingual Special Ed.Specialists in the cultural and linguistic systems of Vietnamese and in the differences between problems arising from second language acquisition and those resulting from language delays and disorders.Special Ed specialists should also know how to deal with Vietnamese parents to have their support and cooperation.

c) In-service Training for Interpreters. Monolingual Special Ed. specialists often use interpreters to help them assess LEP students.Unless they are proficient in both languages and also knowledgeable in special test procedure,the interpreters would not be of much help. With the present salary paid to educational p araprofessionals,it is not reasonable to expect interpreters and teachers' aides to meet the above requirements. Therefore , it is necessary to train the existing paraprofessionals in the skills needed for bilingual special education assessment.

III. SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES.

Like other LEP students,Vietnamese speaking students identified as handicapped are usually placed in the same class as other handicapped children whose native tongue is English.Because of their limited English proficiency the Vietnamese students could not fully benefit from the teaching of the special education teacher.In order to improve this situation the following measures may be considered:

a)Training of Vietnamese bilingual special education teachers and specialists.

This has been dealt with under IIB.a.

b)Training of Paraprofessionals in bilingual special education

Because of the shortage of qualified bilingual teachers,it is necessary to place bilingual paraprofessionals with monolingual teachers and have them conduct actual instruction under the teachers' supervision.These paraprofessionals should receive the appropriate and necessary training in order to be effective in their task.Because of the high professional standards required, these paraprofessionals should receive a much more decent salary than they are entitled now.This would also help retain them on their jobs.

c)In-service training for monolingual special ed. teachers to help them address problems caused by linguistic and cultural differences.This has been dealt with under II .B. b.

d)Training of Parents. Teachers are not the only ones who can help handicapped children.Parents,if properly trained,can help reinforce learning with instructional activities conducted at home.

Vietnamese parents are,in general,not familiar with the educational system of the USA and,in particular,with special education which is almost non-existent in their home country.The training should aim at:a)creating in parents an awareness of the problems which their children are experiencing b)providing a formal practicum which includes clinical sessions on how to reinforce desirable behavior and become responsive communicators with their children c)fostering the faith in the effectiveness of special education in improving the learning abilities of their handicapped children.Parents and paraprofessionals must be considered valuable resources for the education of minority language handicapped children .

e)Providing appropriate instructional materials. At present,no Vietnamese bilingual instructional materials are available for special education.Efforts should be made to:

a)adapt existing materials in English to the needs of the limited English proficient student whose primary language is Vietnamese.

b) prepare supplementary bilingual materials in English and Viet-

namese for handicapped children .

c)prepare guidebooks for teachers and paraprofessionals working with Vietnamese handicapped children.

The big question is: How and where can we find the necessary funds to carry out those worthwhile projects ?

INDOCHINESE CROSS-CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT AND COMMUNICATION

Nguyen Dang Liem

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INTRODUCTION

Chiều chiều ra đứng cửa sau
Ngó về quê mẹ ruột đau chín chiều
Every afternoon, I go and stand at the threshold
of the back door.
My eyes are fixed toward my native horizon, and
I feel a heartbreaking nostalgia.

The Vietnamese lullaby reflects well the feelings of Indochinese refugees.

The massive and controversial movement of Indochinese refugees in recent years creates formidable pragmatic and ethical considerations. Thousands of people have been condemned to death at sea by refusal of aid or sanctuary. Other tens of thousands languish in camps today. Assumptions about refugees, often implicit, generate attitudes which become uncritically translated into public policy and personal behavior. Meaningful debate of the morality and practicality of policy positions and individual attitudes requires better understanding of the refugee experience, behavior and communicative styles.*

When the refugees from Indochina first came in 1975, the United States government was more concerned about self-sufficiency and employment of these people than about their cross-cultural adjustment and communication. Federally funded programs under the Indochinese Refugee Assistance Program (IRAP) (which became the Refugee Assistance Program (RAP) after the influx on Cubans and Haitians in 1980), have since stressed the vocational training of household heads and almost totally ignored needs for cross-

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*This paper greatly benefits from the meticulous editorial comments and valuable recommendations of Michelle Barker, a graduate student in the School of Social Work of the University of Hawaii at Manoa. Miss Barker is employed as a Social Worker in the area of Indochinese refugee resettlement in Australia.

cultural adjustment and communication. The Refugee Act of 1980, passed by the United States Congress, approved the creation of the Office of Refugee Resettlement within the Department of Health and Human Services to administer a program of language and job training.

In declaring the passing of the bill (which would later become the Refugee Act of 1980) by the House Judiciary Committee, Representative Elizabeth Holzman, D-NY, chair, House Immigration and Refugee Subcommittee, declared on September 19, 1979:

"For the first time we have a comprehensive resettlement program." The so called "comprehensive resettlement program" emphasized language and job training, and apparently benefitted only a segment of the refugee population, namely the young and able household heads, whom are males. It did not cater to the needs of the women who are homebound because of the presence of their young children, and the elderly. Furthermore, the program did not mention education in cross-cultural adjustment and communication. The aim of this paper is, then, to present the cross-cultural adjustment of Indochinese refugees and Indochinese-American cross-cultural communication. It will do so by reviewing the circumstances under which these people came to the United States and the rest of the Western world, the effects of their traditions on their adjustment process, the psycho-religious forces that dictate their way of life, thinking, and behavior, and their adjustment patterns. Since the cross-cultural adjustment of the Indochinese is a direct corrolate of the conflict and social cohesiveness between these people, their host community and school setting, this paper will also propose solutions to eradicate conflict and to promote social harmony and

cooperation, especially in the area of cross-cultural communication.*

1. INDOCHINESE EXODUS SINCE 1975

With the sudden fall of Vietnam in April 1975, some 125,000 Vietnamese were hurriedly evacuated to Wake Island, Guam, and the Philippines. The first groups left by airplane straight from Tan Son Nhut Airport, and the last ones by helicopters or small boats from Saigon and then by ships from the high seas off the coast of Vung Tau. From the Pacific Islands, the people were sent to refugee camps in California, Arkansas, Florida, Pennsylvania, and to France, Canada, and Australia. Beginning also in April or shortly after, Cambodian, and Laotian refugees crossed the borders into Thailand, and crowded makeshift refugee camps.

Life in camps in Thailand, Wake Island, Guam, the Philippines, and in the United States was hard and full of uncertainties. Everything was new and strange: the food, camp life, the search for sponsors, lack of medical assistance, burning heat and chilling cold, and the communication gap between camp authorities and refugees. The camp authorities wanted to move the refugees as soon as possible, but the sponsors were scattered throughout the nation and the usually large families of refugees were split up, with members separated from one another by thousands of miles. This situation and the fact that over 75 percent of the refugees still had members of their immediate families in their native countries, increased the already strong tendency to fatalism among the people. They kept

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*Since his main goal is to present the cross-cultural adjustment of Indochinese refugees and Indochinese-American cross-cultural communication, the writer stresses similarities between the various people from Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam (in this paper). A brief description of the ethnic groups and their geographic environment appears in the appendices.

aloof and non-communicative with the outside world, while they searched for guidance for their behavior from popular beliefs, Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism.

Since 1975, people have continued to flee Vietnam in unseaworthy fishing boats and rafts, or to cross the fireline at the borders of Laos and Cambodia to get to Thailand. It is estimated that half of the Vietnamese never make port, and half of the Lao and Cambodians never reach Thailand. Those more fortunate get to other countries, such as Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, or the Philippines. From July 1979 to approximately the end of 1981, the United States has been accepting 14,000 Indochinese refugees monthly, particularly those already in camps in Southeast Asia. There are now approximately three quarters of a million Indochinese in the United States. Other countries such as France, Canada, and Australia also pledged to accept more Indochinese refugees at the International Conference on Indochinese Refugees in Geneva in July, 1979. Presently, there are some 200,000 Indochinese in camps in Southeast Asia. The Orderly Departure Program which allows qualified Vietnamese to leave the country is being encouraged for humanitarian purposes such as family reunions.

2. COMMON INDOCHINESE TRADITIONS

It is not possible to develop an understanding of the adjustment process and cross-cultural communication pitfalls of Indochinese refugees without a knowledge of what life was like for these people in their homeland.

Life in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam is based on a "rice culture" attuned to the rhythms of seasons of planting and harvesting. For a thousand years, the technology of the water buffalo was stable in the

lowlands, and the method of slash-and-burn rice cultivation was traditional among the people in the highlands of Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. One's ancestors, the source of one's life, had planted and reaped on this land. Their graves stood in the rice fields and their spirits continued to watch over the family. Individual death did not mark an end. Here the past and present merged: there existed the sense of a natural harmony between the people of the land, between the living and the dead.

The cradle of Indochinese society was the village. Enclosed behind a tall bamboo hedge in other societies, each village was a separate entity, complete with its own population, customs, and even its own deity enshrined in a communal house, a tiny world within the rural world of Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. The village provided the individual with security in a potentially hostile environment. Within its web of social relations, one's place and duties were exactly defined even in the language itself: the use of kinship terms as personal pronouns in the Indochinese languages always indicated the social, hierarchical, or age relationship of the two speakers. In the past, few people left the villages where they were born, for to do so was to leave their place in the world, to lose touch with their past and their ancestors' interactions, entering a moral, legal, and spiritual void. Thus, communication with people from other villages, let alone foreigners, were either nonexistent or based upon an inherent distrust. One could consider these settings rustic, yet it was within the encircling hedges of the villages and the absence of communication with the outside world that the people of Indochina found the strength to carry on a resistance to cultural and racial assimilation.

In Indochina, the family rather than the individual, is the basic unit of society and harmony in personal relationships is valued more than personal achievement and competitiveness, which are deemed selfish.

Intelligence, scholarship, and, by extension, wisdom are valued more than physical prowess or bravery for its own sake. Physical beauty and grace are important attributes for both men and women, but virtue is praised more highly.

Filial devotion, brotherly love, and conjugal fidelity are highly valued. Marriage was formerly arranged by the family. Second wives and mistresses have been an institution reluctantly tolerated by the first wives. Refugees who come to the U.S. have to abide by the law which allows a man to have only one wife.

In communicating with the people from Indochina, Western observers have often been intrigued with their grace, charm, intelligence, and apparent friendliness. They have also come to realize that the character of these people is more complex than initially suspected (Liem, 1980a).

Long experience with foreign domination has taught the people of Indochina a wariness of all strangers, never entirely nullified by the desire for friendship and mutual understanding. One must never be in a hurry to explain oneself. The Cambodians, Laotians, and Vietnamese possess an inwardness, a well-developed ability to keep their true feelings hidden. Desires are expressed by indirection, by hinting, and "talking around" the subject.

American straightforwardness is considered at best impolite, if not brutal. In Indochina, one does not come directly to the point. To do so is, for an American a mark of honesty and forthrightness while a person from Indochina sees it as a lack of intelligence or courtesy. Falsehood carries no moral structure for a Cambodian, Laotian, or Vietnamese. The essential question is not whether a statement is true or false, but what

the intention of the statement is. Does it facilitate interpersonal harmony? Does it indicate a wish to change the subject? Hence, one must learn the "heart" of the speaker through his/her words.

In Indochina, one thinks very carefully before speaking. The American style of "speaking one's mind" is thus misunderstood. The Indochinese listener looks for hidden meanings which can't be found but to be looked for and perhaps "found." On the American side, meanings present are missed, leading the Indochinese to regard Americans as "unintelligent."

The Indochinese, (accustomed to their behavioral norms and communicative styles,) are likely to encounter cross-cultural difficulties as they try to adjust to different behavioral norms and communication styles.

3. COMMON INDOCHINESE PSYCHO-RELIGIOUS FORCES

Before the cross-cultural adjustment of the Indochinese is discussed, it is crucial to recapitulate the common moral and religious universe of these people, that is, their psycho-religious universe. Their religious universe is composed of Buddhism, the cult of ancestors, popular beliefs, Confucianism and Taoism. To these psycho-religious and philosophical elements, Christianity was added in recent history. There seems to be a perfect harmony of religions in Indochina in that their teachings co-exist as an amalgamous wisdom guiding the behavior of each Indochinese person whether Buddhist, ancestors' worshipper or Christian.

(a) Popular Beliefs and the Cult of the Ancestors

Nowhere on earth, according to the philosopher Jung, does a society exist which is not convinced of the immortal and transcendental nature of the human soul, embodied in a psychic principle capable of surviving the disintegration of the body.

With the Indochinese, this psychic principle consists of a number of more or less pure elements: the souls and vital principles whose numbers vary from one ethnic group's beliefs to another's. The number of souls ("HỒN") and vital principles ("PHÁCH") varies from males and females: man possesses three souls which command the superior functions such as life, intelligence, and perception, and seven vital principles which are concerned with the visceral functions; woman is said to have nine vital principles instead of seven because of her supplementary responsibilities of childbearing. Of the three souls of human beings, the "LINH HỒN", or the sould for intelligence is the transcendental one. While the principles related to the organic functions wane with life, the "LINH HỒN" possesses the capacity for survival. This is the origin of the Cult of the Ancestors which is practiced by the Vietnamese and other Indochinese people.

The Cult of the Ancestors requires that one must honor the dead on a par with the living; and the greatest misfortune conceivable is to die without leaving a male descendant to perpetuate the Cult of the Ancestors. If a person dies without leaving any descendants at all, however, the souls of the dead, for lack of homage and honor on the occasions of traditional feasts and anniversaries, are doomed to eternal wandering--one of the most appalling maledictions which could afflict any family. It is thus that the custom of polygamy among the Indochinese was explained, and justified in the eyes of the law, because it more or less assured that there would be a descendant to participate in the cult. Adoption was considered to be a last resort.

The Cult of the Ancestors is accompanied by a (range/variety) of beliefs and practices. The Vietnamese believe that the souls of their ancestors are the natural protectors of the family line: it is to them

that prayers are addressed, imploring, for example, the curing of a sick child; their influence, and the sum of good actions they accomplished in their lifetimes, are also used to explain success in business, in examinations, and all other fortunate developments.

In the family, the ancestors's altar is the piece of furniture of greatest value. It is the place where the entire family gathers on the occasions of the main feasts of the year. It is a rallying place--a symbol of family solidarity. Around the altar, in presence of the ancestors, all discord must disappear; and it is before the altar that major decisions are made, and marriages consumated.

The Cult of Ancestors, which has no connection with religious faith, exerts a profound influence on the daily life of the Indochinese people. The recollection of the ancestors--the fear of offending them or soiling their reputations--coupled with the desire to please them, are sources of inspiration, which guide the actions of the descendants. Even for a hardened sinner to lack respect for the ancestors is the worst offense imaginable.

The Cult of the Ancestors can act as a substitute for religion, and many Indochinese content themselves with it. But this cult is only a consequence or a sort of continuation of the respect owed to the parents beyond their terrestrial existence. Thus, filial piety and the cult of the ancestors are but two aspects of a single obligation. Filial piety stems from the idea that a child is indebted to his parents for all the sacrifices they made for his upbringing and education. The child thus owes his parents many favors and kindnesses, in addition to gratitude for the greatest kindnesses of all: the gift of life. Consequently,

the child thus owes submission to the authors of his existence no matter what his age. When his parents grow older, he ought to prove his gratitude by providing for their wants, as in the words of a Vietnamese popular song:

> The kindnesses of my father are comparable to the Thai mountain,
> Those of my mother, to a perennial Spring.
> With great fervor I venerate my father and my mother,
> In order to conduct myself as a pious son.

(b) Buddhism

Buddhism is practiced by the majority of Cambodians, Lao, Vietnamese, and Chinese Vietnamese. According to Buddhism, life is a vast sea of suffering in which one wallows hopelessly. In effect, the vicious circle of existence is renewal in the course of endless reincarnations. The cause of suffering is desire: desire for life, happiness, riches, or power. If desire were suppressed, the cause of pain would be destroyed. The essence of Buddhist teaching is contained in the concept of Karma, the law of causality: the present existence is conditioned by earlier existences and will condition those that follow. Thus the virtuous person should strive constantly to improve by doing good deeds and by renouncing sensual pleasures in order to become conscious of Buddha who is present in every living being. Consequently, desire must be first overcome and a pure heart is necessary to break the chains binding one to an earthly existence in order to reach the state of bliss called Nirvana.

(c) Confucianism

Confucianism as a religion or philosophy of life is prevalent among the Vietnamese and Chinese Vietnamese. Its concepts of social hierarchy and piety exist among other people of Indochina. Whereas Buddhism teaches the

Indochinese to strive for Nirvana, Confucianism addresses social problems. Confucius founded his doctrine on the basis of etiology. He said that the stabilizing of a regime depends on an ideal and this ideal can have value only if it is based on great examples from the past.

The doctrine of Confucius is set forth in the four classical texts called "TỨ THƯ" and in the five cannonical works called "NGŨ KINH". Following are the Confucian teaching points that will help us understand the behavior and the adjustment problems of the Indochinese. These points are: the innate goodness of man, self-perfection, and social relations.

The Innate Goodness of Man.

According to Mencius, the most distinguished of Confucius' disciples, a man is inherently good; and to preserve this inherent goodness, it is only necessary to keep passions in check. If men do not live up to their potential goodness, it is because they neglect their intellect, which atrophies in the hum-drum routine of everyday life. The wise man, in contrast to the ordinary man, improves himself through study; he knows himself, and is the master of his passions. For this he will be honored by his heirs, and his soul will have peace in the hereafter. In sum, those who do good are rewarded and those who do evil must suffer the consequences.

Self-Perfection. According to Confucius, there are four rules which must be followed to achieve perfection. First, one must be interested in everything which exists, and second, be able to penetrate the secret, inner essence of things. The third requirement is clear thinking, and the fourth is a pure heart.

Social Relations.

Confucianism is a doctrine of social hierarchies. It defines the

attitudes which each member of the society should have by rigid rules; and it prescribes the formula for three all-important sets of social interaction, called "Tam Cương." These interactions are between ruler and subject, "Quân Thần," between father and son, "Phu Tu," and between husband and wife, "Phu Phụ." It also dictates a moral code for the man of virtue, "Quân Tử," who should be a living example of the five cardinal virtues humanity, equity, urbanity, intelligence and honesty. The man of virtue should also follow a path of moderation: exaggeration in any direction is to be avoided, and equanimity is to be cultivated. This attitude has often been mistaken by Westerners for impassiveness, placidity, or even hypocrisy. This moral perfection may be progressively attained by traversing four essential steps: the improvement of oneself, the management for the family, the governing of the country, and finally, the pacification of the world.

As for the woman, she should in all circumstances conform to the three obediences: obedience to her father until she is married, obedience to her husband after she leaves her father's house, and obedience to her eldest son, should she be widowed. Further, the model woman should possess the four essential virtues: skill with her hands, agreeable appearance, prudence in speech, and exemplary conduct.

(d) Taoism

Similarly to Confucianism, Taoism has direct influence on the way of life of the Vietnamese and Chinese Vietnamese. His concept of harmony, however, permeates other Indochinese cultures as well. Whereas Buddhism teaches the Vietnamese to seek happiness after life in the form of Nirvana free from the vicious circle of life and death, Confucianism and Taoism both teach seeking of happiness in the present. The former essentially

recommends dynamism, activity, and advancement by means of self-improvement; the latter essentially advocates inertia, blending with nature and harmony with self, with fellow human beings, and with the universe. Thus, one could picture the Buddhist way toward happiness in Nirvana as a direction vertically upward, the Confucian trajectory toward happiness as a horizontal arrow forward, and the Taoist road toward happiness as a horizontal arrow but directly opposite that of the Confucian one. From this picture, it is possible to see how the Taoist influence suggests a neglect of material possessions, success, power, and activities. It directs the Indochinese to look for pleasure and contentment in nature, quietness, and a peaceful worriless mind. Especially when faced with apparently insurmountable difficulties such as those of a refugee, a defeatist attitude toward the outside world in general, and toward communication with fellow human beings in particular may be adopted.

In comparison with the other religions, Christianity was introduced to Indochina relatively recently. It was not until the 16th century that Christian missionaries began preaching the Gospel in Vietnam. As was said earlier in this paper, whether a Vietnamese is Buddhist, Taoist, Confucian or Christian, the teachings of Buddha, Confucius and Lao Tsu constitute a source of wisdom which dictate his behavior in general and his communicative style in particular. Added to these religious forces, his native geographic and historical conditions also play an important role in his world view.

Despite more recent moves to the cities, the Indochinese kept their roots in the villages where agriculture prevailed and dictated the mode of life. For this reason, the Indochinese peasants face natural

catastrophies stoically. Intelligent in their daily work, knowing how to cope with inevitable disasters, they were truly Pascal's "thinking reeds" which bend but do not break under strong winds. This flexibility when faced with difficulties has helped the Indochinese endure through the long years of war, and the trauma of their exodus and resettlement. It is hoped that it will help them in their cross-cultural communication and integration into the host community. Their adjustment may be hindered by nostalgia, loneliness, and even lack of stamina due to their attachment to their native land.

4. CROSS-CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

The adjustment of Indochinese refugees is dependent on both the degree of social cohesiveness within their own communities, and their relationship with the American host community.

(1) Relationships among their Communities and Families

Following are the common problems among the Indochinese refugees of all ages within their own families and communities:

--being separated from missing family members

--painful memories from war and departure from home country

--homesickness

--difficulty in communication with family in home country

--lack of native community support

--family conflicts due to role reversals

(2) Relationships with other groups

An overall lack of English language competence among the population, especially among the elderly and home-bound women, prevents them from having meaningful relationships with their host community, citizens and students organizations,

and often civic clubs. It also hinders their use of health and social services.

(3) Organizational Participation

There is almost a total lack of participation in American organization by the Indochinese elderly, a matter explained by their English language proficiency. In places where there are well organized Indochinese mutual assistance associations, the elderly have an opportunity to meet with their own people.

Indochinese home-bound women more actively participate in mutual assistance and religions associations than their male counterparts. It is also very encouraging to see Indochinese high school and elementary students getting more and more involved in extracurricular school activities.

(4) Use of Mass Media

Because of their deficiency in the English language, the use of mass media in English as a means of information is minimal among the elderly population. The elderly and adults read local newsletters and US-mainland journals in their vernaculars. It is a great source of consolation for them to publish in these newsletters.

4.1. ADJUSTMENT ACROSS AGE GROUPS

Ingrained in their traditions and governed by their psycho-religious forces, the Indochinese elderly more than any other age group among the refugees, are encountering the difficult task of dealing with many unfamiliar aspects of life. The adult group, eighteen to forty years of age, has the economic advantage of work and earnings but is psychologically

disadvantaged because its members were born and raised in the midst of confusion and war. Children seem to adjust themselves in the new cultural environment faster than the other two groups. But they run another kind of risk, namely of being in a cultural vacuum and of not firmly and deeply grasping either the Indochinese way of life or American behavioral patterns.* Across all ages, there is a common element: the refugees experience more or less acutely "culture shock" which may entail severe mental, emotional, behavioral and psychosomatic difficulties. Culture shock is largely due to adjusting the differences between one's native way of life and the new environment. Human beings, however, possess the ability to adjust or adapt to the new conditions, and patterns of social interaction.

The following discussion will focus on the different adjustment patterns of the elderly, adults, and children.

4.2. ADJUSTMENT OF THE ELDERLY

While retirement age is normally 65 in the United States, it used to be 55 for white collar workers in Indochina or whenever the farmer's children started working in the fields and are able to support him. When one retired, his financial needs were met by his children as discussed in the previous section on the family system and respect for parents. In the United States, the Indochinese elderly's children, even when they want to, are unlikely to be able to support them. They have to rely upon Social Security income/benefits which are minimal for them since they have not worked in this country and contributed to it, and which carries in their own eyes a psychological stigma of being abandoned by their

children.

As for the employment of those who consider themselves to be elderly but who are under 65, it is difficult for them to find a job because of the lack of knowledge of English and marketable skills. For the lucky ones who have a menial job, their income is predictably very low.

Acculturation motivation

Most if not all the Indochinese elderly left their country with the sole purpose of being with their children and grandchildren. A few of them are preliterate in their native language. The majority of them, even if they have been attending English for the last five or six years, do not speak enough English for their daily living. Because of their original purpose of coming to the United States and their linguistic handicap, the Indochinese elderly are generally not highly motivated to learn about the American culture and social system, let alone to socialize with the American people.

Image of self and others

Because of their loss of their children's financial support and their own respect and role in the family, the Indochinese elderly tend to have a low self-esteem.

Feeling of alienation

Because of their considerable difficulties in adjusting to the new linguistic and cultural environment, the Indochinese elderly feel alienated from the host community. Ironically, they also feel that they are not as useful to their own groups as they should be, consequently they also feel a certain degree of alienation within their own people.

The elderly's fear of death

As mentioned earlier, the Indochinese elderly believe in the immortality of the soul. In order for their souls to have a secure life after death, there should be proper ceremonies at the funerals and good care for their souls after their death. Unsure of a piece of land for their tombs, necessary offerings, and the existence of an ancestor's altar, the elderly are fearful of their future after death.

Recommendations

In his transactions with the Indochinese elderly, the American should remember the Confucian hierarchy according to age mentioned above. He should always show them his respect both linguistically and extra-linguistically. The rule requires that he sit still in front of elderly people, his eyes are directed downwards and not straight to his interlocutors, and his feet should be flat on the ground and not crossed. Gesticulation is considered to be bad manners.

4.3. ADJUSTMENT OF THE ADULTS

The majority of Indochinese adults have a high acculturation motivation because they see their future in this country. However, they likely have a low self-image and a feeling of alienation like the elderly.

According to a survey in Illinois in 1980 (Kim 1980), the rate of unemployment of Indochinese refugees steadfastly decreases as the length of their stay in the United States increases (62% unemployment rate among the fifth-year residints (Kim 1980: 13). The same study shows that the income level of Indochinese refugees raises parallely with their length of residency

The general pattern of employment of Indochinese refugees is that the majority of them start with menial jobs. This state is a viable cause for social conflict between the newcomers and the unskilled oldtimers. Similarly the fact that the refugees depend on public financial assistance in one form or another when their income is low and that they compete for low cost housing is another cause for potential inter-ethnic conflict.

Pertinent to the employment and social interaction is the Confucian social hierarchy mentioned above, namely between ruler and subject, which explains the success or failure in the relationship between the Indochinese worker (in the role of a subject) and his employer (in the role of a ruler), as well as in the relationship between the refugee himself and his sponsor.

The Indochinese employee considers his employer as his mentor. As such, the latter is expected to give guidance, advice, and encouragement, and the former is supposed to execute orders, to perform his task quietly, and not to ask questions or have doubts about the orders. This seemingly passive and unimaginative attitude is aggravated by a linguistic difference between other Indochinese languages and English. For example, the Vietnamese literal equivalent of the English word "Yes" is "Dạ" (pronounced ""Ya" in the Southern Vietnamese dialect). However, whereas the English "Yes" means unequivocally "Yes", the Vietnamese "Dạ" means a variety of things. In the final analysis, it can mean "Yes", but in general usage it merely means "I am politely listening to you", and it does not at all mean that "I agree with you". The listener may disagree with what he hears, but due to his politeness and deference to his boss (or his

sponsor), cannot say no. His English "Yes", for him conveys the polite and non-committal Vietnamese "Dạ", but to the American it can carry only its English meaning. Thus, the Vietnamese may appear insincere, or even stupid to the American.

The enigmatic smile

Another factor that can contribute to strain and misunderstanding between the Indochinese and the American is the enigmatic Indochinese smile. The Indochinese smiles when politeness prevents him from contradicting his interlocutor. He also smiles when he does not completely understand what is said to him and yet, also out of politeness, does not want to ask for clarification.

At the same time, the Indochinese expects his employer to be paternalistic, kind, and soft-spoken. The latter's direct and straightforward speech sounds rude to him. And because he is not supposed to retort or talk back, the only alternative for him is to try to swallow his frustration until he cannot bear it any more. At that time, his last recourse is to resign and to look for another boss who would be more understanding and kind by Indochinese standards. This problem of communication is aggravated by the fact that, being in a strange environment and new job, and in most cases not speaking English well enough to express his thoughts, the Indochinese is likely to misunderstand his American boss and is likely to be misunderstood by him.

Marital Relationships

Also, relevant to the pattern of employment of Indochinese is the third set of Confucian social interaction, that between husband and

wife mentioned above.

It is quite apparent that the role of the traditional Indochinese woman and her relationship to her husband according to the Confucian norm, may clash with the reality of the American environment. In most cases, the husband's salary alone is not sufficient to meet the high cost of living in the United States. The wife then has to work to supplement the family's income and often is able to get a more lucrative job than her husband's. Furthermore, nature seems to favor women in their second language learning and hence the wife makes better progress in speaking English. Again, there is a role reversal. The husband feels, either consciously or unconsciously, threatened. On the other hand, the wife, because of her work and interaction with the outside world, does not have enough time to perform her traditional role in the family. Being exposed for the first time to the "Women's Liberation Movement" --freedom, self-sufficiency, and equality, the Indochinese woman may react more strongly against the traditional role than her American counterpart. This conflict between her husband's conservative expectations and the role of women in American society may precipitate breakdowns in the family structure. All this may cause marital problems as seen in a growing number of divorces. In the past, the expectation of the four traditional virtues limited the education of the Indochinese woman to the high school diploma in the majority of cases. In Hawaii particularly where the job market is tight, openings for the Indochinese woman often are found in jobs related to the tourist industry and often requires them to work at night. These jobs are distasteful and arouse the suspicions of her husband. This may be another source of marital conflict.

Recommendation

In his relationship with an Indochinese couple, the American man should always bear in mind the above Confucian set of social interaction between husband and wife. Whether he is a counselor, social worker, doctor, or salesman, the Confucian etiquette requires that he talk to the husband first before talking to the wife. Even while he is talking to the wife, he should always make the husband feel that he is the head of his family. His sitting arrangement vis-a-vis the two of them should also reflect this male preponderence: the husband should be in front of, and closer to him than the wife.

4.4. ADJUSTMENT OF THE CHILDREN

Indochinese children mostly have the acculturation motivation, self-image and feeling of alienation transmitted to them by their parents.

The set of social interaction between father and son in Confucianism is governed by the rule of total obedience of the son to the father mentioned above. In terms of psycho-cultural adjustment the rule of order may create conflict between the father and his sons and daughters in this country. The father adapts more slowly, if at all, to the American culture where his relationship to his children is less formal and restrictive than what he is used to. He expects them to conform to the Confucian order just as he himself did in his relationship to his own father. But the children are socializing with their own age group here and tend to act in the American way. Also in most cases, if not all, the children speak English better than their father. The father resents the reversal of roles, his children feel

it, and the situation could explode into an open confrontation between the two. Or, the children may conform to the traditional norm of relationship with their father. In that case, they may feel their difference to their peer group.

Recommendation

When working with Indochinese families, it is important to respect the father's position in the family. In some cases it is necessary to use the child as an interpreter, for his English may be better than his parents.

However, questions to the father should be addressed directly to him, and not to the child. The same principle holds when working with an interpreter in other situations.

Due to the influence of filial piety on the daily life of Indochinese, teachers and counsellors need to be aware that Indochinese students may approach career choices in a different manner to American students.

The parents of the Indochinese student may have directed him about whether he should continue on to college, or even the exact career to follow.

As Indochinese children become more exposed to the American norm of independence from parents, they may be caught between their own desires and the will of their parents.

Press reports indicate that like many Asian-Americans, Indochinese students are achieving very high standards in American high schools. Reasons for the 'super-achievement' of some students is attributed to high achievement motivation, the students' desire to please their

parents, and the emphasis placed on education in Vietnamese culture. This also creates additonal stress for the students during their adjustment to American society.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SOCIAL COHESIVENESS AND CROSS-CULTURAL HARMONY

As was stated earlier, the Refugee Act of 1980 aims at self-sufficiency among the refugee population. Consequently, English language and vocational training accounts for most of the programs Federally-funded under the Act. It benefits mostly employable household heads--the majority of them are male--and leaves the homebound women and elderly unassisted. Furthermore, it ignores the whole area of cross-cultural understanding and adjustment, a matter that seems to be of utmost importance considering the outbreaks of inter-ethnic tensions surfacing in various parts of the United States.[1]

The following recommendations pertain to Indochinese refugee population in the nation:

(a) Bilingual bicultural education

A bilingual bicultural education program for Indochinese students in particular and for refugees and immigrants in general would greatly diminish inter-ethnic conflicts and would significantly contribute to inter-ethnic conflicts and would significantly contribute to inter-racial cooperation and harmony.

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1. In transitonal camps in Southeast Asia, the United States in collaboration with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, has set up very valuable educational programs in English as a Second Language and Cultural orientation.

It should have a twofold purpose: (1) to establish the right to use and retain the vernacular in education, and (2) to provide a more humane and pedagogically more realistic approach to the learning of English as a second language by ethnic minorities (re: Liem 1979).

(b) English Language Training

Because of its prime importance in all aspects of resettlement and adjustment, English language training deserves the highest priority in any program. It should be tailored according to the specific needs of its clientele --i.e. an ESL program for the pre-literate elderly should emphasize survival skill, while a curriculum of English for special purpose for the job-bound learner should be oriented to that job situation (see Liem, 1980b and 1980c). In other words, it is strongly recommended that English language classes be set up for the elderly and the homebound women. Such English classes should be experientially relevant to daily life situations.

(c) Cultural Orientation

The Indochinese like the rest of the refugee population in the nation, need a practical program of cross-cultural communication and orientation ranging from house-keeping to how to introduce oneself to one's neighbors. This program should be parallely conducted with the ESL program, and could be best done in the native languages by the refugee mutual assistance associaitons. It should present the hearthian culture (i.e. the do's and don't's, thepecking order, the way of life, how people cater to their personal, educational and religious needs) and the Olympian Culture (i.e. the highlights of people, the arts, theater, contents of museums, etc.) of both the

American and the Vietnamese cultures for comparison purposes.

(d) Family Ties

The strong, traditional ties amongst Indochinese families can be used in resettlement. It is encouraging to note attempts by community organizations throughout the U.S. of trying to re-establish the elderly's primary role in teaching and caring for their grandchildren.

Working mothers may also be attracted to child care facilities where other Indochinese women are employed as care-givers.

(e) Counseling

Counseling services should be more readily available and culturally relevant to the needs of the refugees. For example, to an Indochinese who feels that he has lost relatives and friends, the Buddhist concept of reincarnation could be soothing in that he would have hope for seeing his beloved ones in next life. To the one who has lost his status and fortune, the Taoist quest for a return to simplicity, harmony and nature could very well be a source of hope and strength. Further, to acknowledge someone who misses his past glory as a high ranking government official, and to remind him that his grandchildren are doing very well in school is to give him a perfect Confucian consolation and encouragement. It helps him recognize that there is generational progress in his family.

Some family counseling needs to be done in order to help the refugees to adapt traditional family roles and ties to the present environment: for example, helping parents to understand that their working daughter-in-law is not able to perform all her traditional duties to her in-laws and ancestors, because of the pressures of her other responsibilities more attention should be given to training ethnic welfare workers to

work with their own communities.

(f) Community Networks

The traditional mutual assistance network among villagers could be revived in mutual assistance associations (MAA) where the elderly could give advice--which is of real help in mental health and greatly appreciated--to adults, and teach children to preserve their linguistic and cultural heritage. The Refugees of Indochina Culture Education mental health service in Honolulu (Sanborn and Liem, 1978) used the elderly and community leaders as "gateway keepers" whose role was to counsel in minor cases and to refer critical cases to the service. It is proved to be very beneficial to both the elderly and the entire community. Such MAAs will also be most culturally, linguistically and psychologically beneficial to adults and children alike.

(g) Cultural Orientation Training for Service Agencies

Intercultural communication just like interpersonal communication is a two-way process. The refugees need to be sensitive to the communicative styles and behavioral norms of the service providers in their host society. However, teachers, counselors and all who work with refugees, also have an understanding and appreciation of the way of life and attitudinal differences of the Indochinese. We must strive not to reinforce the stereotype of the ugly Americans on our own soil.*

*Through making an effort "to start where the chart is" the service providers may find that their work has become more satisfying and their communication more effective. In turn, this will lead to greater harmony in cross-cultural relations.

(h) Cross-Cultural Communication

Touching is frequently used by Americans to convey caring. However, in interacting with Indochinese people, it is important not to touch students on the head because it is considered to be the place where the spirit abides. It is acceptable if a teacher touches the shoulders of a student of the same sex.

Doctors, teachers, etc. may find it helpful to anticipate questions that patients or students might have. Due to the esteem attributed to teachers and professionals in Indochina, refugees would feel extremely uncomfortable about asking questions, and they would expect the professional to be sensitive to what information they require.

Cross-cultural communication could be facilitated if community agencies provided information on thier services that have been translated into Indochinese languages.

The use of trained bilingual interpreters and translators could serve to decrease the frustrations of Americans and Indochinese alike.

Leaders should be identified within the local Indochinese communities. They could act as consultants about the needs of various age groups within their communities; the impact of agency policies, etc., and the best ways of informing community members about available services.

Attention should be given to establishing an international, centralized Research Clearing House or Indochinese educational, economic, social, and cultural adjustment.

CONCLUSION

It is the conviction of the writer that the ultimate goal in resettling refugees in the United States is to make the newcomers

not only tax payers but also happy citizens. In order to arrive at that goal, not only do we need to assist them in becoming economically self-sufficient, gut we also need to help them, and ourselves, to have a better mutual understanding and appreciation. The American dream of liberty, equality, and freedom will not be completely realized until the newcomers--the refugees and immigrants--are given their chance to enjoy them and to contribute their human heritage to our cultural plurality.

It is most encouraging to note countless success stories of the Indochinese resettling in the United States. It is the author's belief that the qualities of flexibility of these people enable them to overcome incredible odds to re-establish their lives in their new environment. It is also the writer's firm belief that had we listened to Henry David Thoreau and returned to nature, we Americans would not have had the problems of natural devastation, pollution, and the Three Mile Island nuclear tests. The refugees and immigrants from Indochina in particular and from Asia and the Pacific in general, have a lot to offer to us in terms of harmony with ourselves, others, and the rest of the universe. Is it not high time for us to have a balance between our technological progress and the nurturing of our human and natural environment?

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APPENDICES

1. Overview on Indochina
2. Cambodia
3. Laos
4. Vietnam

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Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos are situated on the part of mainland Southeast Asia between India and China. In 1893, the French proclaimed the area to be the Indochinese Union. In the Geneva Conference of 1954 separate treaties were ratified allowing the three nations to be independent.

The initial discussion will focus on customs and values shared by "Indochinese" refugees. After this, the history, language, and cultural aspects of each country will be discussed separately.

Family Life

The "typical" structure of Indochinese families includes grandparents, aunts, uncles and other relatives in addition to parents and children. A young married couple may live in the home of one of the parents, while other relatives live nearby.

The father is the head of the household in the immediate family, and he is supposed to uphold family traditions and set the moral standard for his family. Traditionally, parents and the elderly are given a lot of respect from children and youth. The oldest child has the responsibility of caring for younger siblings, who in turn obey and respect him.

Sometimes this closeness is weakened in refugee families when the children are exposed to different values in American culture. Refugees may try to rebuild family ties, by trying to live in the proximity of other family members in America.

Education

Refugees in the U.S. come from a wide range of educational backgrounds. Many of the K-12 age refugees have had major disruptions to their schooling since 1975, and because of ad hoc schooling while they stayed in refugee camps.

Education is highly valued. Reasons for this come from various religious

traditions that stress understanding and harmony, and respect for the spirit.

Teachers were highly respected under the French school system operating in Indochina until 1975. A didactic teaching method was used, and children were not encouraged to ask questions.

Thus, refugee children and their parents may have difficulty adjusting to the more participatory style of learning practiced in the U.S.

Religion

There is a great diversity among religions in the region. Ancestor worship and spiritual reverence to gods or objects are common. Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, or other traditions such as Christianity or Islam are frequently practiced.

The important ritual of visiting ancestral graves may make separation from their homeland even more difficult for some refugees.

Traditional medical practices may require a folk doctor or shaman to rid the evil spirits, or prescribe herbal remedies.

Eating Habits

Food and related hospitality are an important part of Indochinese cultures. Rice (usually glutinous or long-grained) is eaten with most meals. The diet is supplemented with meat (especially beef and pork), poultry, fresh fruits and vegetables.

American food and its method of preparation may seem unappetizing to refugees initially.

Employment

Many refugees are accustomed to farming and fishing and devoting their lives to a single job or a single company. Fixed work hours, career change and upward mobility, may be unfamiliar concepts. Manual labor is traditionally regarded as low status work in Indochina, and so some refugees may view such unemployment offers in the U.S. as demeaning.

CAMBODIA

Geography and Climate

Cambodia is a rich agricultural country, approximate in size to the state of Missouri. Most Cambodians live in villages, and landless tenants are relatively unknown. Farmers generally had an adequate living standard, tending rice and orchard plots.

Dominant features of the largely plains country are the Thongle Sap (Great Lake) and the Mekong River.

History

Originally known as Funan (100-500 A.D.) and later Cheula (500-800 A.D.), Cambodia under the Angkor period (800 A.D.-1432) had many accomplishments in culture, arts and architecture. The Angkor Wat temple erected during this period is one of the seven wonders of the world, and it is displayed on the Cambodian flag.

Between the end of the 13th century and becoming a French Protecorate in 1864, there were struggles for territory between the Thais and the Khmers, the dominant ethnic group in Cambodia. Prince Norodom Sihanouk led the country to independence in 1954, was overthrown in 1970. The Khmer Rouge (Khmer Communists) gained control in 1975 under Pol Pot. In 1979, Vietnamese Communists overran Cambodia, and installed a puppet government headed by Heng Samrin. Pol Pot and his supporters escaped into the jungle and initiated an ongoing guerilla campaign, hoping to regain control in the future.

The People of Cambodia

In 1975 the population of Cambodia was estimated to be 8 million with about 85% ethnic Khmer (Cambodians). A considerable number of Khmer lived outside of the country in sections of Thailand and South Vietnam that were formerly part of the Cambodian kingdom.

After six years of the Communist regime, starvation, disease and continuous fighting, only 3 or 4 million people are believed to remain. It is said that the Cambodian people have been psychologically devastated. Even when they have a chance to resettle, they still think about and grieve for loved ones who have perished or disappeared during the war.

Family Life

The nuclear family is more prevalent in Cambodia than the extended family found in other Southeast Asian countries. Religious practices and socializing usually take place within the family structure. The males are expected to be actively involved in community and religious life. Within the family, the wife is primarily responsible for the socialization of the children, and all financial matters. She is typically given great respect both within the family and the wider community.

Marriage

Compared with Americans, Cambodians, especially those living in rural areas, maintain traditional values regarding marriage and sexual behavior. Sexual matters are not freely discussed and marriages are usually arranged by the parents.

All sexual standards tend to be more flexible for men than for women. Divorce is legal but not common, and is usually discouraged.

Language

Khmer (also known as Cambodian) is the official language of Cambodia, and is the mother tongue of the ethnic Khmer. Unlike other languages of Indochina, it is non-tonal and has a number of two-syllable words. The writing system is complex.

Names

Before the French arrived, every Cambodian had one given (first) name, such as Ek, Bo, Phal or Chamreun. The name has a personal, specialized

meaning, as it is chosen for the child by an astrologer. Cambodians prefer to be addressed by their given name.

The French arbitrarily imposed the system of surname-given name. The last name always precedes the given name: for example, Sok San. Sok is the surname and San is the given name. The family name is usually the name of a father, grandfather or great grandfather.

Informally, a woman is called by her given name: for example, Miss Rith Bopha, and formally by her husband's name: for example, Mrs. Sok San.

Customs, Traditions and Beliefs

Religion

Theravada Buddhism is followed by nearly 85% of the population, and has been the official religion in Cambodia. Theoretically it requires that followers take full responsibility for their own actions. The pagoda is the center of the community in rural areas but in larger cities, traditional practices have decreased.

Animism, a belief in supernatural beings, is practiced in some remote areas. Christianity is also found in Cambodia.

Holidays and Celebrations

The biggest Khmer celebration is New Years, a three-day celebration beginning on April 13. It is a time for visiting relatives and friends, taking food to the temple, and attending religious ceremonies.

"All Soul's Day," regularly celebrated on September 15, is the most important ceremony. It is a day of prayer for the souls of those who have died. There are several Buddhist religious holidays.

Khmer Music and Dance

Like Khmer architecture, sculpture, literature or dance, Khmer music is characterized by its spiritual nature.

Classical dance dates from the Angkor period.

Education

Public education began only last century. Most Cambodians now complete elementary school and many continue into college. Until 1975, education was standardized throughout the country, and it was provided at three levels.

Level 1: elementary school through grade 6;

Level 2: lycee, a high school, through grade 13; and

Level 3: university-level studies

Food and Eating Habits

Rice is always served with meals. Pork, chicken and fish, vegetable and fresh fruit are included.

Most Cambodians use spoons to eat, other use forks, and others of Chinese descent use chopsticks.

Social Customs

Many Cambodian customs and practices differ from American ones. The greeting involves placing the hands together near ones own face. The height of the hands is an indication of the esteem felt for the other person. Children are greeted in order of their age and never interrupt adult conversation.

The head is considered to be the most important part of the body (the place where the spirit resides), thus it is extremely insulting to touch a Cambodian's head.

Feet are the lowest part of the body in value, and it is impolite to step over someone's feet or legs.

The politeness of Cambodians may sometimes make them appear shy to Westerners. For example,invitations must be repeated to be seen as sincere. Similarly, indirectness seems much more polite to a Cambodian than direct confrontation.

LAOS

Geography and Climate

Laos is a landlocked country whose economy is based largely on agriculture. It has an area of 91,000 square miles. Economic development is limited due to the lack of transportation and communication.

History

In 685 A.D. the Lao people moved from the Yunan area of China and settled in the northern part of Laos and Thailand. By 1779, the three major kingdoms were colonized by the King of Thailand. Many unsuccessful attempts by the Laos to free themselves from Thai domination followed. By 1893, France took control of Indochina, and in 1907 a treaty was signed dividing Laos into two nations, one under French control, and the other under Thailand.

The Japanese conquered Laos during the Second World War, but the French regained control in 1946.

Many Lao leaders fled to Thailand to create a "Free Movement" that was successful in gaining greater independence in 1949. Those who remained in Thailand, founded a movement known as the "Pathet Lao," led by Prince Souphanouvong.

Laos achieved full independence in 1954, but power struggles continued. A coalition government formed in 1962 under Souvanna Phouma received U.S. aid. This support was phased out in 1973 when a coalition between the communist Pathet Lao and the Royal Lao Government was created. By 1975, communist control was total. The current exodus of refugees began at that time, as those who resisted the communist control escaped the country.

The People of Laos

Many ethnic groups live within Laos. The lowland Lao who live along the

rivers are the largest single group. Other ethnic groups, upper-land (Lao Theung), and highland (Hmong and 'Tien) Lao, often support themselves by slash and burn farming.

1. The Lao

Family Life

Larger extended families form the central social unit in Laos. Four generations may live in one house. As the traditional head of the family the man makes critical decisions and is responsible for the household's general well being. Women take care of financial matters, cooking and household chores. Children, whose respect and obedience are demanded, commonly remain in their parents home even after marriage.

Marriage

A marriage is usually approved of by both parents. The groom or his family must pay a dowery to the parents of the intended bride.

A Lao man may have several wives, although the custom is now rare.

Childbirth

Most women who live in towns give birth in a hospital while women in the countryside give birth at home, assisted by their husband and a mid-wife. After a 30 day recovery period, a well-wishing ceremony, "Sou-Khouane" is performed, followed by a feast.

Death and Funerals

Most people prefer cremation, their ashes being kept in a pagoda until a tower can be built for them. There are no funeral homes in Laos, so the body id usually kept at home until the funeral.

.Buddhist priests must be present at any funeral ceremony.

Language

The Lao language is basically monosyllabic and tonal. The writing system is an Indian-based alphabet and written from left to right.

Names

Lao names are written in this way: Souksomboun Sayasithsena. Souksomboun is the given name, and Sayasithsena is the last or family name. Most names usually have a positive meaning. A married woman normally takes her husband's family name.

Customs, Traditions and Beliefs

Religion

The majority of Lao people are Buddhists, although other religions are practiced by a minority. Most Lao parents prefer having a son, because he can enter the monkhood and participate in the teaching of Buddhism. Before marriage, most Lao men are required to enter monkhood for at least two to three weeks.

Holidays and Celebrations: Lao New Year or "Pi Mai"

"Pi Mai" is the most widespread and popular celebration, and usually occurs between April 12 and 15. It celebrates the beginning of spring and the start of the planting season.

During ceremonies in which the Buddha statuettes are bathed, people pray for the well-being and prosperity of their loved ones, and that the water will wash away their sins and misfortunes. They then pour water over one another and wish each other a Happy New Year.

Lao Music and Crafts

Dance movements are stylized and folk music forms an integral part of all festivals.

Craftsmanship, particularly in the production of objects for household and farm use is highly developed.

Education

Kindergartens and pre-schools are usually private and expensive.

Children start public school at six years. Students must pass exams at the end of elementary school and at the end of tenth and twelfth grades, in order to proceed to the next level.

Food and Eating Habits

Favorite goods include glutinous or sweet rice, Padek (a Lao-style fish sauce, hot peppers, and lemon grass). Fresh meat is preferred to frozen meat, and so Lao people in the U.S. look for opportunities to hunt deer, or to have cattle slaughtered for them.

In Laos, most families sit on the floor around a rattan table, although city people may prefer a Western-style dining table. Rice is usually eaten by hand, but spoons, forks and chopsticks may be used.

Laotians stress the importance of meals and are well known for their hospitality.

Social Customs

The usual form of greeting or leaving is the "wai," which consists of joining hands with open palms together, raising them from the chest or head, depending on the degree of respect one wishes to express.

Lao people do not typically shake hands with older people unless the elder offers his hand first.

Laotians never kiss as a form of greeting. In fact, it is shocking to most women to be kissed by a male or female in public.

2. The Hmong

For centuries, the Chinese and other Southeast Asians have called the Hmong "Miao." They take offense at this because it means "barbarian," and refer to themselves as "Hmong" or "freeman."

History

50,000 Hmong migrated from China to northern Laos in the early 19th century to find more land for farming and to escape hostile neighbors. By

the mid 1960's the population had grown to 350,000.

Located near the border of North Vietnam, they have never had a peaceful life. Most of the Hmong men from 12 to 55 years old were recruited by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency to fight the North Vietnamese and Laotian Communist forces in Laos in order to block North Vietnamese expansion to South Vietnam. When the Royal Lao government collapsed, they were forced to flee the country or risk being slaughtered because of their involvement in efforts to rescue American pilots who had been shot down over North Vietnam, or in other American military operations over a fifteen year period.

A few of the Hmong families were airlifted to safety in Thai camps, but thousands were abandoned and had to run for their lives through the jungle. Those who remained were sent to reeducation camps, gassed or killed.

Many Hmong were assaulted, abused or killed during their 20-25 day walk from the hills of Laos to Thailand.

The Clan

The Hmong are intensely clannish people who put a great deal of trust in their leaders. Admission to a clan can be by birth, marriage or adoption. The head of the clan "communicates" with deceased ancestors of clan members in specific rituals.

Marriage

Marriages are a form of social exchange and a price for the bride is usually arranged by both sides. The idea of paying for the bride is to assure the wife that she will be highly valued. A man can have more than one wife, and the second wife usually has less prestige than the first.

Language

The Hmong language is tonal, and is related to Yao or Mien. The various dialects of the three tribes may be mutually intelligible or differ considerably.

Religion

The Hmong believe in many supernatural beings, and reincarnation. Although many Hmong become Christians or Buddhists, some retain the Chinese religious customs that they adopted before coming to Laos.

Education

Most Hmong are unable to read or write in any language. They teach their children orally. Days, months and years are counted by marking dashes on the walls. They did not have access to Lao schools until the 1960's, when they were forced to move to the lowlands from the mountains, where there were no schools, books or signs.

Social Customs

The Hmong are usually very hospitable people. They will not hesitate to bring out the whiskey, which has been fermenting for months or to stay and visit until late into the night. Women almost never participate in such social visits with strangers. They retire early since they must get up long before daybreak to begin their numerous daily chores.

3. The Mien

Originating in Central China, the Mien were originally related to the Hmong ethnic group.

Childbirth

The expectant mother does not talk of being pregnant, as it is important to conceal the matter from ever-hovering evil spirits. A mother may be ill at ease if outsiders compliment her "pretty child," because she fears that spirits may harm the child.

Religion

Mien practice animism with a host of gods and nature spirits.

Education

The majority of Mien are illiterate in their own language. A segment

of youth can read or write Lao to some degree.

Food

The Mien diet comprises rice, green vegetables and some red peppers. Pork and chicken are used mainly at festival times and for guests.

4. The Tai-Dam

The Tai-Dam are a relatively small ethnic group that most recently lived in Vientiane. They originally lived in Vietname and have always maintained their own cultural characteristics.

While some of them are practicing Christrians, as a result of past missionary efforts, most are Buddhists and animists.

Family Life

Family life is characterized by the size and closeness of families. Great respect is accorded the elders.

5. The Lao-Theung

The Lao-Theung, another ethnic group found in Laos, lived primarily in mountainous areas. There are approximately 700 in the U.S. mostly in the Stockton, California area, and some in Arkansas.

They are processed as Lao refugees, but they identify more closely with the Hmong. They were animists until 1960, when most were converted to Christianity. They were forced out of their homeland like other ethnic groups by the military struggle.

VIETNAM

Geography and Climate

Vietnam occupies the whole 1200 to 1400 miles of coastline from the Chinese border on the north to the Gulf of Siam in the south. The total land area is 127,000 square miles of beautiful mountainous plains, and small deserts. It is about the size of the state of New Mexico.

The climate is tropical with greater seasonal differences in the north. Damaging typhoons sweep across the coast irregularly between July and November, when very heavy rain occurs.

Vietnam is a predominantly agricultural country, with an estimated 80% of the population (1979 estimates: 53 million) farmers.

History

Crawford presented a simplified history of dates and events by dividing them into five eras:[1]

2879 B.C. to 111 B.C. - Establishment of a nation

111 B.C. to A.D. 938 - Chinese domination

1883 to 1954 - French domination after World War II

The first era is described in legends. It is important that the Vietnamese emigrated from central China.

The second era characterized by Chinese domination is significant for the great influence the Chinese had on the culture of the Vietnamese, whose earliest formal records and literature are recorded in Chinese. The end of this area was a time of revolt. One of the early rebellions was led by two sisters, Trung Trac and Trung Nhi.

During the era of the dynasties, especially during the eleventh century Ly Dynasty, the country was unified, and cultural development and Buddhism were established.

During the French administration France was established as the second language and great advances were made in the areas of medicine, architecture, administration and education. In the latter part of this era, as France fell in World War II, the Japanese occupied and exploited the country, while still maintaining the French colonial administration.

As the Japanese and French were reducing their involvement, the independence of Vietnam was realized. Ho Chi Minh established the "Democratic Republic" in Hanoi, while a national government was organized in Hue.

The attempt of France to reinstate her colonial regime forcefully and the Vietminh decision to oust them from Hanoi started the war that began a "duel between world communism and democracy."[2]

The French withdrew in 1954, and millions of refugees fled into South Vietnam.

The early 1960's were marked by a steadily increasing penetration of South Vietnam by Vietnamese Communist guerillas known as the Viet Cong.

Beginning in early 1965, the pace of the war accelerated sharply. From being largely supportive and advisory, the U.S. role increasingly became one of active combat. The internal political situation in South Vietnam was in turmoil. After the coup d' état in 1963, President Ngo Dinh Diem was killed, and successive military regimes ruled.

Finally, after persistent peace talks and negotiations, a peace agreement was signed in Paris in January 1973.

The peace agreement was intended to bring about a cease-fire, the beginning of negotiations between the two Vietnams towards a political settlement, and the withdrawal of foreign military forces. All U.S. forces withdrew within the stipulated 60-day period. While South Vietnam lost the vital support of the U.S. and had too little time to consolidate its own

strength, North Vietnam continued a massive infiltration of troops and military supplies. The defense system in the south disintegrated rapidly and Saigon finally fell to the Communists on April 30, 1975, causing a massive and chaotic evacuation of at least 100,000 vulnerable people in a few days. Then followed a continued exodus of refugees seeking asylum.

The People of Vietnam

About 85% of Vietnam's population (1960's estimate - 15 to 16 million in the south and 16 to 17 million in the north) is ethnically Vietnamese.[3] The remaining 15% includes three principal groups: Chinese, Montagnards and Khmer.

1. The Vietnamese

The family is the basis of the social identity of the individual, and the structure is paternal. A man looks first to his family for help and counsel in times of personal crisis. A married woman joins the family of her husband. Filial piety is considered one of the most important duties of a person. The traditional household consists of three generations.

Language

Vietnamese is basically monosyllabic, and it has six tones, which give it a sing-song effect. The three main dialects correspond to the geographic regions of north, central and south.

Early in the 20th century, Vietnam adopted a modified Roman alphabet to replace the old writing system adapted from Chinese characters.

French was used in government administration and education from 1904 to 1945. However, with the American involvement in the late 1960's, the use of English increased and eventually took precedence over the French language.

Names

Vietnamese names are written in reverse order of American names:

family name, middle name, and given name.

The family name is placed first to emphasize a person's roots. There are about 300 family names, and the family name Nguyễn is used by at least half of the population.

A Vietnamese is addressed and referred to by his personal name. For example: Nguyễn Văn Hai - Hai being his personal name - would be called Mr. Hai. The Vietnamese woman usually keeps her maiden name upon marriage.

The middle name may indicate the sex of a person (Văn for males, Thi for females).

The personal name often has a meaning that represents a precious object or a moral virtue.

Customs, Traditions and Beliefs

Religion

There is no official religion.[4] The majority of the population are Buddhists, but they may also be Confucianists and Taoists. "The Three Teachings" constitute the foundation of all customs and manners of the Vietnamese. The Taoist concept of harmony, the Confucian ethical and social principles, and the Buddhist theory of reincarnation and act retribution have been blended together to a form of philosophy and religion.

Christianity, mainly Roman Catholicism also exists in Vietnam.

Holidays and Celebrations

Tet or Lunar New Year is the most important feast of the year, which generally occurs in February. It is a family reunion, a spring festival and a national holiday. Since Vietnamese do not celebrate each individual's birthday, Tet is also everyone's birthday. This is also a time to pay homage to ancestors.

Education

Education has always been extremely important in Vietnamese society, and educated people have traditionally held an honored place.

Education was free and mandatory for all children from age six through the first five primary grades.

Secondary school was divided into two cycles; a four year cycle, followed by three years. Based largely on the old Chinese and French systems, education was by observation and memorization of subject matter, rather than experimentation and critical questioning.

Food and Eating Habits

Rice is the basic food, supplemented by vegetables, eggs and small amounts of meat and fish. Fruit such as bananas, mangoes and papayas are popular. "Nước Mắm" or fish sauce is a principal ingredient in most Vietnamese dishes.

Vietnamese are used to very little mild and milk products in their diet.

Social Customs

Great respect is shown to elders, superiors and strangers. Hugging between very close friends may be seen in some cases, but public kissing is not acceptable.

Beckoning with a finger up is considered a sign of contempt that is used only toward an animal. Instead, the palm of the hand is placed downward with a slight flutter of the fingers.

Because of their traditional sense of propriety, Vietnamese make every effort to maintain harmony in communicating with others. Frankness and outspoken expressions usually are considered rude, and true feelings are often veiled or communicated in an indirect manner.

2. The Ethnic Chinese

The ethnic Chinese population is estimated at about one million, nearly all of whom have adopted Vietnamese nationality. Most, however, faithfully observe Chinese customs and traditions. Essentially merchants and trade middlemen, they usually group themselves into highly organized economic colonies in the urban areas, and play an important role in the country's economy.

Death Rituals

Buddhist or Taoist rituals are performed to pacify the soul of the dead and to assure that they resettle peacefully during the transition period before the soul can be reborn again.

White dress is usually worn at the ceremonies. After the burial, a black patch or armband is usually worn by members of the family for a period of one month to a year. During this time they are discouraged from enjoying themselves by going to movies or parties.

Language

There is considerable diversity in dialects among the ethnic Chinese as well as some variety in customs. The dialects are Hokkien, Teochiu, Hakkas, Cantonese and Hainanese.

Customs

The Sino-Confucian tradition, with its emphasis on morality and ethics, propriety, close family ties, and respect for elders and authority is strong among the Chinese and Chinese educated. Bad experiences and feelings are shared only with close relatives and intimate friends, not with mere acquaintances.

Montagnards

This second largest minority group lives in the mountains of north and central Vietnam. They total about one million and include more than thirty tribes, representing numerous ethnic, social, language and cultural patterns.

Khmer

Estimated at about 500,000, the Khmer clusted in the Mekong delta area. A considerable number have adopted Vietnamese nationality, intermarried and share Vietnamese religion and customs.

Approaches for Identifying and Servicing Indochinese Handicapped Students

Tran Huong Mai
Rockville, Md.
June 1985

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Approaches for identifying and servicing Indochinese handicapped students.

Introduction

The Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, PL 94-142, is both an education law and a civil rights law. The law specifies that all handicapped children must be seeked out, evaluated, and be given an appropriate education. The law's ultimate goal is to protect the rights of all handicapped children to a full educational opportunity. However, for Asian Americans in general, and for Indochinese youngsters in particular, the impletation of PL 94-142 has been at best minimal. The difficulty is partly caused by the sterotypical belief that Asian Americans as the "model minority" do not suffer from disadvantages associated with other minority groups. Asians, by virtue of hard work, education, thrift and initiative have lulled the general public into an attitude of "benign neglect" to the extent that concerns of Asian Americans are secondary to problems of other minority groups.

Another obstacle to the successful implementation of PL 94-142 for Vietnamese children is the lack of appropriate assessment instruments and qualified examiners, and the lack of understanding of the cultural and linguistic differences of the Indochinese population. This in turn often results in misinterpretation of the educational needs of Indochinese youngsters and misplacements in educational programs.

Concern has been voiced by educators and other professionals that equal educational opportunity has not been extended to Indochinese students in terms of critically needed special education services. School staff do not feel they have the expertise for accurately assessing handicapping conditions in Indochinese youngsters because of the different language and cultural background. School officials are also uncomfortable in referring children, because of the social and emotional factors associated with the Indochinese settlement in the United States.

In order to respond to the concern raised that needed services are not being extended to Indochinese children with handicapping conditions, this paper joins in the concerted effort to seek ways to identify and serve Indochinese

children having handicapping conditions in order to better serve the Indochinese community.

This paper will:

1. review the procedures for identifying and servicing handicapped students in the Montgomery County Public Schools in Maryland,

2. present various referral cases involving Vietnamese students where assessment and placement in educational programs are debatable,

3. suggest avenues which educators could explore in order to ensure that Indochinese students having handicapping conditions receive an equal educational opportunity so as to reach their full potential.

1. Processes and procedures for identifying and servicing handicapped students in Montgomery County.

a. MCPS

The Montgomery County school system (MCPS) located outside Washington DC is one of the 20 largest public school systems in the United States. It has more than 150 schools spread over 500 square miles, and employs 5,000 teachers. Its student population was 92,000 in 1984 and is projected to be approximately 94,000 in the 1985-86 school year.

MCPS has a national reputation for academic excellence. Because of its proximity to Washington, it has tradionally enrolled a large number of immigrant students and children of diplomatic families. The number of Indochinese students varied from a low of 1500 in 1977 to a high of 3800 in 1985. Asians make up about 9.1% of the total student population, and Indochinese students make up about 15.75% of the Limited Proficient Students (LEP) enrolled in the ESOL program.

Approximately 11.5% of MCPS students are categorized as handicapped of which 3.9% are of Asian descent. The figures shown in Table 1 indicate that Asians and Hispanics as minority groups are underrepresented in special education programs while Blacks are overepresented. Although the data does not show the number of Indochinese students receiving special education services it is evident that Limited Proficient Students (LEP) among which a sizeable number are Indochinese, are underrepresented in programs for the handicapped.

It can certainly not be presumed that Indochinese as a group are free from handicaps which afflict the rest of the American population and do not require special educational programs designed for children with handicapping conditions. The reason for their underrepresentation in programs for the handicapped must then be attributed to other factors which need further research and scrutinizing.

b. Special education referral and assessment in MCPS.

Procedures for referring and assessing children suspected of having handicapping conditions in MCPS are clearly defined in various handbooks for general and special educators in the school district. These procedures are summarized in the illustration attached, entitled "Summary of Access to Continuum Education Services Procedures for MCPS Secondary Schools."

The process is as follows:

A teacher, a parent, a counselor, or even the student himself/herself may initiate a referral based on concern of the academic progress, the social or emotional behavior of the student. Usually, the classroom teacher or the counselor would consult with parents and attempt an adjustment or strategy to deal with the problem. If this attempt is not successful, the teacher then request a conference with the educational management team (EMT). The EMT is a committee composed of a principal, various specialists in fields such as special education, reading, and speech, a counselor, and classroom teachers who are familiar with the student's academic or socio-emotional progress. The EMT may suggest additional strategies or have available additional resources to try to meet the youngter's needs. The EMT may also decide that more formal assessments need to be administered to the student to gather more information.

If the student is an LEP child, he/she is usually referred to the Bilingual Assessment Team for observation and testing. The Bilingual Assessment Team is an interdisciplinary unit composed of two bilingual psychologists, and two bilingual educational diagnosticians who have expertise not only in ESL/Bilingual education but also in special education. In cases where human resources are called for and are not available within the team to adequately assess LEP students, per diem bilingual psychologists or interpreters fluent in other languages can be hired to help in the interview and assessment processes.

Following referral of the student for more formal assessments, consent from parents must be secured in order to test the child. The child is then tested by

professionals such as psychologists, speech pathologists or the bilingual assessment staff and others who are in the adminstrative area of the school in which the student is located.

Because the MCPS referral, assessment, and placement procedures emphasize working with the parents of handicapped children, the Bilingual Assessment Team, which has members who can speak the parents' native language, has been more successful in reaching parents than monolingual staff have been in the past.

If on the basis of this assessment there appears to be appropriate documentation of a handicapping condition, then a school admission, review, and dismissal (SARD) committee is convened. This group is equivalent to the concept of team and parent involvement in all aspects of the identification, placement, and provision of special education services to handicapped children which is fundamental to PL 94-142. The SARD invites the child's parents to meet with them and examines the assessment information which is provided by the qualified examiner as well as by the child's teacher. This committee , in addition to the parent, includes the child's teacher, an administrator, a special educator, the school nurse or physician, and others as appropriate. The group tries to reach consensus on a handicapping condition and appropriate placement for the child, and is responsible for developing the child's individual educational program.

For purposes of assessment for placement in special education programs, MCPS and the state of Maryland recognize the special education teacher as the qualified examiner for educational assessments of reading, math, spelling, written and oral language skills and perceptual motor functions, the school psychologist as the qualified examinier for assessments of cognitive or emotional factors, and the speech therapist for speech and language disorders. Physical assessments are administered by appropriately licensed or certified medical, opthalmological, audiological or neurological staff.

A variety of screening instruments are used within MCPS. The Bilingual Assessment Team uses standardized instruments as well as adaptations of standardized instruments in their formal testing procedures.

In spite of renewed efforts to identify all children who might be eligible for special education services, the situation as demonstrated in Table 1 clearly shows underrepresentation of Asian, and LEP students in programs for the handicapped.

2. Case studies.

For the purposes of this paper, and in order to protect the privacy of the individuals presented in these cases, the identity and certain circumtances surrounding events associated with each case have been altered.

Case A.

A is a 16 year-old adolescent from Vietnam who just enrolled in the MCPS. She was placed in grade 10 with students of her age group in a school where an intensive English language program for LEP students was available. School officials and teachers knew that she came to the United States seven years ago with her family and that she was previously enrolled in a neighboring public school system. From the tests results in English language skills that were administered prior to her placement in MCPS, tests which are given to all entering students whose native language is not English to determine their English language proficiency, it seemed appropriate to place her in one of the four intensive English language centers located in various schools in the county. In the center A followed a regular LEP student schedule which included two periods of ESL, one period of bilingual Social Studies, one period of Math for LEP students, one period of basic Science, one period of Physical activity and another period of an elective subject such as art, home economics and others.

A is a shy, quiet, and unobstrusive student. Her teachers qualify her as a very cooperative student with a very pleasant personality. The only difficulty was that she seemed unable to accomplish any of the academic tasks assigned to her in spite of her eagerness to do so. Efforts were made to have A evaluated for possible placements in special programs; in the mean time, she was maintained in the Intensive English Language Center with her regular LEP program. A year later, A was finally given a formal psychological evaluation by a bilingual psychologist.

Following is a summary of the psychologist's evaluation:

> A is the second of seven children. Interviews with her parents reveal that A was born two months premature but that there were no complications with labor or delivery.
>
> Yet from birth to age 2, A often had high fever followed by convulsions and transitory loss of consciousness. From age 5 on, it rarely occured again. A's developmental milestones, as her mother recalled, were marked with severe delays in walking and talking.

At home, A was often viewed as "very slow in learning and working." A was slow in understanding what people were trying to tell her, and had difficulty remembering what was presented in class a few days before. Because of her difficulty in school, she eventually dropped out and stayed home to help her mother run a grocery store.

She was at the time seven years of age.

A was nine when the entire family fled to the United States. A eventually enrolled in a public school system where her academic progress remained questionnable; but because of her limited English language proficiency she was not referred for evaluation until she was ready to enter Junior High school.

A was given five tests to determine her intelligence and developmental maturity. During the evaluation, A was extremely cooperative, and attempted to work diligently on tasks presented to her but her abilities were quite limited. She had to give up on many simple questions and tasks. Her motor responses were very slow and clumsy.

Results of the tests administered reveal significant weaknesses in verbal and visual motor areas. A also had a great deficit in information processing. Even in her native language, she experienced great difficulties in receptive ad expressive language abilities. One of the tests also revealed errors in rotation, integration and distortion of shapes which suggest some neurological impairment.

In summary, results from the evaluation seemed to indicate that A is functioning within the Mildly Retarded range of intelligence.

Following the evaluation, the psychologist made the following recommendations:

-A should be considered for a placement in the Special Education Program for Mentally Retarded students. Vocational training should be provided simultaneously with academic training if possible.

-An intensive ESL program, preferably on a one to one basis should be prepared, with survival English emphasized.

-Materials should be presented to A through a multi-modal approach i.e. through as many modes as possible, combining the motor response with visual, auditory, kinesthetic and tactual stimuli.

-A special physical education program or participation in sports should be encouraged to increase the

effectiveness of A's gross motor skills and self-confidence .

-A should be encouraged to participate more in class and social activities to help enhance her self-esteem and self image.

-Parents and relatives should learn to support and work with A a home.

This is clearly a case where special education placement and delivery of services should have been made years before A enrolled in MCPS. It took eight years before this student was placed in special programs for the handicapped. It took an entire year before this student could be formally assessed for possible placement in special education programs. Because of the reluctance of most school officials to label non-native English speakers as handicapped individuals, and the zeal of most educators to provide the suspected children with "another chance to succeed", many youngsters such as A are not referred and therefore cannot be appropriately evaluated for differential educational programs. In summary, it took much more time than necessary for the student to be able to exercise her rights to access to a meaningful educational program, and to one which could best meet her individual needs.

Case B.

B is an 11 year-old boy who arrived in this country two years ago from Vietnam. B was enrolled in an elementary school as soon as his family was able to find a house for the family which consists of nine children, an elderly father and the mother. B came from the semi-rural area of Vietnam and had limited access to education. B was more fortunate than many other Vietnamese children in his age group and in his circumstances in that the war and the subsequent communist take-over of the country, did not disrupt his family life to any great extent. After two years of schooling in the United States, however, B had not made the progress expected for most children of his age. Although B preferred in all instances to use English instead of his native Vietnamese, his oral language as well as his reading and speaking skills were extremely poor. He seemed to distort sounds and garble his English speech to the point of being virtually incomprehensible. B was referred for more formal evaluation by his ESL teacher. The bilingual assessment team psychologist, who in this case spoke acceptably good Vietnamese, tested B for possible speech, language and psychological abnormalities, and their relationship to the lack of academic progress.

Following is the assessment made by the psychologist and the diagnostic teacher who both evaluated B.

B had a normal childhood and his developmental milestones indicate normal progress. His mother indicated in the interview held with the psychologist that B spoke at a later age than his female siblings but that he eventually caught up with them. In Vietnam, B had a total of 1 and 1/2 years of schooling. In the United States, B was placed in the fourth grade with children of his age. He is presently in the fifth grade.

According to B's records and staff reports, B received sporadic English language instruction during his two years in the public school. He also received remedial reading and speech/language support. However, B is undeniably behind academically at least in the language-related areas.

Home observations suggest that there is a lack of interchange and stimulation between family members. B's parents were farmers in Vietnam and had a speech pattern which seemed terse and choppy. B exhibited a ready smile and cooperation with the adults who tested him.

Observations made during the testing sessions showed that B seemed to comprehend more than he could express. B did not want to use Vietnamese but preferred to use English in most his answers to the examiner. His speech and articulation patterns in Vietnamese seemed to mirror those of his parents but did not appear to be handicapped. In English, he made pronunciation errors consistent with errors made by Vietnamese speakers of English.

Results and interpretations of the tests given to B, suggest that B would have a lot of difficulty in processing a number of different stimuli at once, but otherwise seemed to function in the average range of intelligence.

It was noted that caution should be exercised in interpreting the results of these tests since they were standardized on monolingual English speaking populations.

The psychologist and speech/language therapist made the following recommendations:

-because B's language for educational purposes is the main concern here, both examiners concurred that B needed to develop more complex linguistic structures in order to progress in oral, reading, and written expression

-that B be considered as handicapped and be put in a self-contained class which addresses his language deficiency

-that the Language Experience Approach be used in teaching B a second language so that he can develop his language skills and his capacity to integrate information from diverse sources.

This case is not as clear-cut as the previous one. Unfortunately, it is suspected that many situations similar to this one and involving Vietnamese youngsters have been referred for further evaluation and were not always recognized as needing special education instruction. This case also points out the need for an special education program which would incorporate remedial instruction as well as social and cultural experiences which B severely lacks, with the development of cognitive skills.

B's parents, being unaware of the educational system in the United States need to be informed of the programs that would best meet their child's needs. It would be extremely hard for the parents to have any input into the educational process of their child in this particular situation; therefore, school officials should take onto themselves the task of determining the child's educational needs. B's parents in this case do not have the means to help their child adjust to the social and cultural norm of their new country; hence, school staff should be responsible to provide this child with the knowledge and skills necessary to function in the American school and social enviroment.

Case C

C is a 12 year-old Amerasian boy who came to the United States a year ago. C enrolled in an elementary school soon after his arrival from Vietnam, and is presently in grade 6. In spite of his recent arrival in this country, C can express himself fairly well in English. However, he has difficulty completing his tasks and does not get along with his peers. Interviews with his mother indicate that C has never seen his father, eventhough his father lives nearby. C seems extremely anxious to meet his father and carries a picture of his father with him at all times.

In Vietnam, C attended school until the 4h grade, but did not like his school experience. . He did not have any friends. He now believes that teachers in Vietnam often punished him only because he did not look like his peers

In the United States, C is always left unsupervised after school because his mother must work late. C's mother, on

the advice of her lawyer, does not allow her former American husband to see his son.

C is still waiting to be evaluated by a psychologist.

Assessment made by the Bilingual Diagnostic/Prescriptive teacher is as follows:

> C was given five different diagnostic tests. According to the test results, C shows a below average ability in solving non-verbal problems. He also has severe visual-motor integrational skills. C exhibits many academic and social needs. He has had a very traumatic past; unsympathetic teachers and peers did not appreciate and even despised his western heritage. Having grown up without a father C is apparently very anxious to have a male authority figure in the house.

The following interim recommendations were made for C pending a more evaluation from the Bilingual Assessment team psychologist:

-that a teacher or counselor act as a mentor and work with C on a daily basis to improve C's social skills and emotional needs.

-that an evaluation of C's intellectual funtionning and emotional behavior be given as quickly as possible

-that C be allowed to receive instruction from an ESOL teacher on a daily basis to improve his English skills.

C's case was recommended for further evaluation in early March of this year. As of June 5, C has yet to be evaluated. C's case, however, is not uncommon among Indochinese children. It is one which needs urgent attention, but is too often left aside in the hope that "time and cultural adjustment will take care of the problem." This case calls for parental counseling as well as counseling for the child. It is doubtful that C's mother is aware of the isolation and anxiety her child is experiencing. It is even more difficult for the parent to equate C's academic difficulties and social adjustment problems with his need for a father. Any program designed for this student should take into consideration his psychological needs as well as his academic skills. It is perhaps critical in cases like this one to pay special attention to socio-emotional factors. Special programs for children such as C are needed if adequate impletation of PL 94-142 is desired.

3. Recommendations and suggestions

The cases presented above illustrate weaknesses in the identification, evaluation, and delivery of services to Indochinese youngsters with handicapping conditions. Language and cultural differences constitute a significant barrier in the referral and identification process. The lack of appropriate screening instruments and qualified examiners further contribute to the difficulty in successfully implementing PL 94-142.

The following suggestions have been made by many educators; some may be repetitive; still, they need to be seriously discussed and studied if equitable educational opportunity is to be succesfully extended to Indochinese students.

a. The procedures for identifying, evaluating and servicing children with handicaps, such as the MCPS procedures--"Access to Continuum Education Services (ACES)--", were certainly intended to eliminate ambiguities and were developed to ensure a more equitable delivery of services to students with special needs.

The process, however, has a double edged sword for minority and Indochinese children. In trying to protect children from being labelled "handicapped" too early in their educational career, the process has deprived many other children such as the LEP children, of services more tailored to their special needs.

Situations such as the one presented in Case A, are not isolated and may have occured a number of times in other parts of the country.

Uncertainty over the language proficiency and cultural differences should not deter school staff from referring children suspected of having handicaps. Until more appropriate screening instruments are available and qualified examiners found, school officials should make every effort to provide Indochinese children suspected of having handicapping condition with additional opportunities to be placed in individualized instructional programs; in other words waivers for formal documentation should be considered when dealing with LEP children.

b. PL 94-142 and the ACES process mandate that parents be involved in the referral process. In many situations such as in Cases A and B, the unavailibility or the unawareness of the parents on the importance of their active participation, often result in eliminating their children from programs which would better serve their children's needs.

Teachers and school officials assume the responsibility to seek out Indochinese youngsters in need of special placement and develop appropriate individualized programs for them without waiting for the parents' involvement, specially when the parents are new to the country.

c. Indochinese parents who are unfamiliar with the American educational processes should be provided with special training programs. Since laws and services for handicapped students were nonexixtent in their own country, Indochinese parents need to learn the facts and procedures of PL 94-142 and its implementation in the school district in which their children are enrolled.

d. Programs of instruction need to be developed for Indochinese children whose academic achievements are two or more grades below the expected level. In Montgomery County a Mobile Education Teams program (METS) was initiated in October 1984 to meet the needs of newly arrived Indochinese refugees and other children whose academic skills were two or more grade below their levels. Students in this program are given instruction in English, remedial reading and writing skills, and other basic skills, listening to instructions, properly holding a pen for writing and even how to turn the pages of a book. The program is intended to indirectly ease the social and cultural adjustment process of children from Vietnam, Cambodia and other countries, who have serious gaps in their education.

Although it is too soon to determine the benefit of this program, it is certainly one which could be implemented without too much difficulty in school districts where there is a large number of refugee children from Vietnam and particularly from Cambodia.

e. Indochinese children, suspected of having handicapping conditions certainly need social and emotional support. Instructional programs designed for them should have a strong component dealing with the socialization process and should be geared to combatting emotional traumas created by lack of parental guidance, the separation of family and the isolation from home environment.

Office of Special and Alternative Education
Montgomery County Public Schools
Rockville, Maryland 20850

School Summary by Handicap, Race, Sex

ALL STUDENTS AS OF 05/14/85

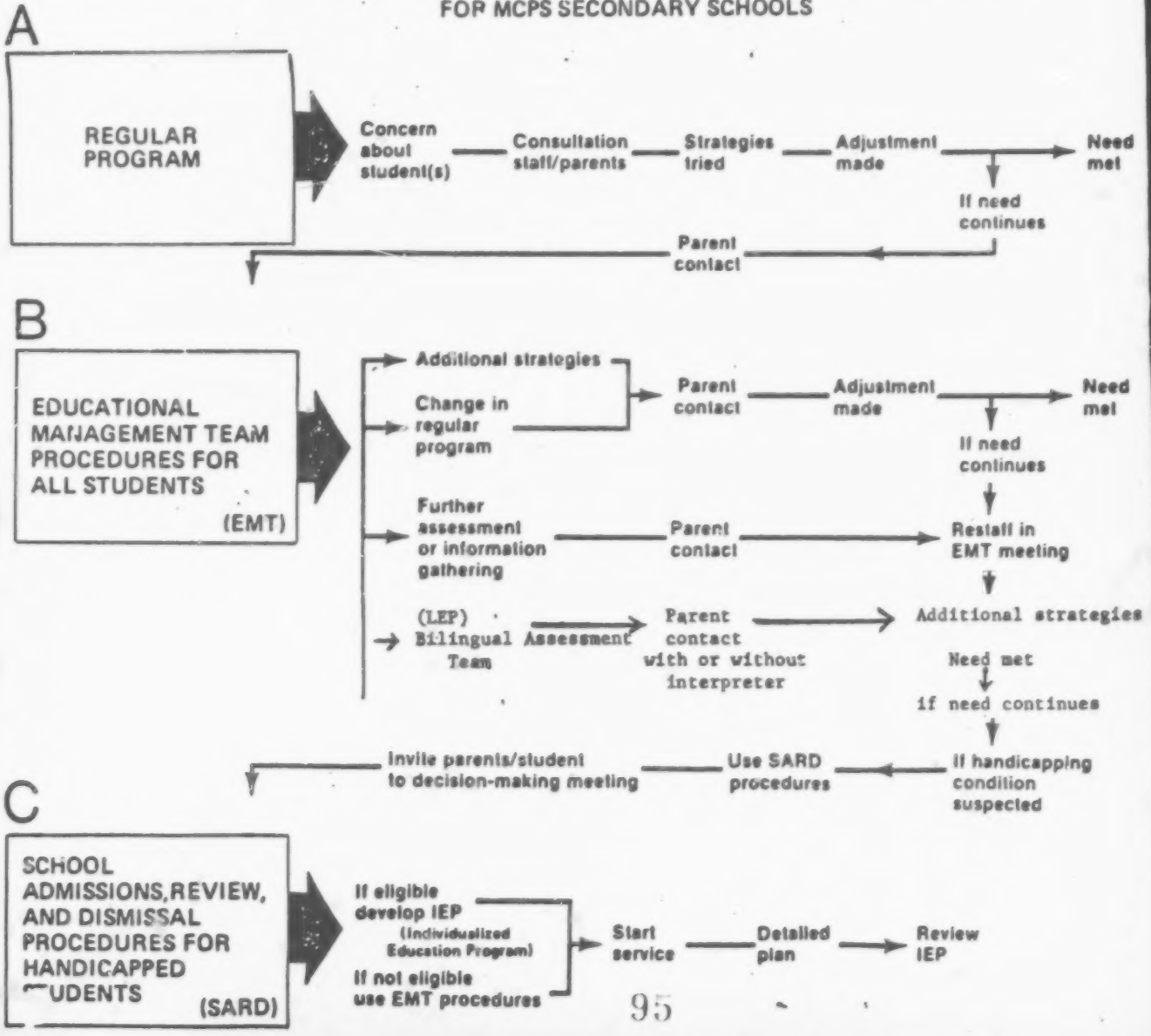
	White	%	Black	%	Hisp.	%	Asian	%	Am. Ind.	%	Total
M-F	65,195	70.9	13,317	14.5	4 993	5.4	8,325	9.1	139	0.2	91,969

	White	%	Black	%	Hisp.	%	Asian	%	Am/Ind.	%	Total
MENTALLY RETARDED M-F	365	69.3	109	20.7	24	4.6	27	5.1	2	.4	527
HARD-OF-HEARING M-F	69	71.9	17	17.7	5	5.2	5	5.2		.0	96
DEAF M-F	87	73.7	10	8.5	11	9.3	10	8.5		.0	118
SPEECH AND LANGUAGE IMPAIRED M-F	1909	69.0	534	19.3	143	5.2	177	6.4	4	.1	2,767
VISUALLY HANDICAPPED M-F	78	70.3	21	18.9	7	6.3	5	4.5		.0	111
EMOTIONALLY IMPAIRED M-F	482	71.0	174	25.6	13	1.9	8	1.2	2	.3	679
ORTHOPEDICALLY IMPAIRED M-F	61	79.2	9	11.7	2	2.6	4	5.2	1	1.3	77
OTHER HEALTH IMPAIRED M-F	6	50.0	2	16.7	3	25.0	1	8.3		.0	12
SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITIES M-F	3988	65.3	1686	27.6	281	4.6	135	2.2	14	.2	6,104
MULTI-HANDICAPPED	355	64.9	143	26.1	27	4.9	22	4.0		.0	547
CHILD IN NEED OF ASSESSMENT M-F	235	62.5	94	25.0	26	6.9	18	4.8	3	.8	376
DEAF/BLIND		.0		.0		.0		.0		.0	
TOTAL	7635	66.9	2799	24.5	542	4.7	412	3.6	26	.2	11,414

TABLE ONE

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

SUMMARY OF ACCESS TO CONTINUUM EDUCATION SERVICES (ACES) PROCEDURES FOR MCPS SECONDARY SCHOOLS



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Evaluation-Assessment-Educational Planning for Indochinese Refugee Children in the American Schools

by

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Evaluation-Assessment-Educational Planning for Indochinese Refugee Children in the School System

by

Tam Dang Wei

In the past decade, large numbers of Indochinese refugees, primarily Vietnamese, Laotian, Cambodian and Hmong speakers, have settled in the United States. In May 1975, about 50,000 of them were under 17 years of age.

This massive influx of refugee children in the U.S. school system brings out a definite urgent need of finding a solution to the problem of evaluation-assessment placement and educational planning for these children.

As a school psychologist and a Vietnamese, I am involved in this type of work and have been dealing with a number of schools' concerns, students' problems as well as parents' worries and frustrations.

This paper is a small attempt to share some points of view, concerns and experiences in this aspect with the hope of bringing a better understanding of the specific needs of Vietnamese refugee children in the American schools. Although I am talking specifically of the Vietnamese group of children, the evaluation process and educational planning should be the same for all bilingual/bicultural children with special consideration for their respective cultural background.

Some Thoughts of Bilingual-Bicultural Evaluation

Evaluation of bilingual-bicultural students is a complex and challenging task. It calls for insight, understanding and acceptance of the child's cultural background in order to understand his/her reactions and behaviors. It demands flexible use of existing evaluation measures with the attempt to make use of test data for educational programming rather than for labeling purposes. It demands openmindedness from the examiner's part to accept the child in order to recognize the very specific needs of that individual student.

This presentation will focus on the evaluation techniques and case studies models that have proven successful in the schools.

The three parts of the presentation will include:

1. The description of the evaluation process with emphasis in the cultural background as influential to behavior-responses of students.

2. Specific suggestions in the guide for non-biased assessment of bilingual/bicultural students relating to:

   - referral
   - gathering of information

- working with the student
- selection of approaches
- use of interpreter
- team approach in the evaluation as well as in the educational planning and follow-up

3. The educational planning

II. Description of the Evaluation Process

To provide an example of the evaluation procedure, the three main steps involved in the evaluation process are described in this section:

1. Gathering of Information
2. The Evaluation
3. The Placement

1st Step: Gathering of Information on the Student

Through school records and meeting with parents, guardian, sponsors, student's background information can be obtained.

a. Family Background

Information relating to the composition of the family (past and present), the educational background of the parents, the socio-economic level of the family (past and present), are the most important factors to look into.

For a Vietnamese, the family is the center of the individual's life, the basic organizational unit that transmits value systems, social, cultural expectations to the children. In the refugee situation, the drastic changes of environment, of life styles, of economic status, occupations and at time of the changing roles in parental authority, are often causes for depression in the parents and anxiety in the children.

This strong family tie can be a source of identity and security but it can also set limits to individual freedom because a misconduct of a Vietnamese is blamed, not only on the individual, but also on the family, relatives, ancestors. Vietnamese children tend to be hesitant to try something new or different simply because they may fear offending their parents or family. This attitude differs greatly with a Westerner who values independence and individual freedom.

The family's educational background is another important factor to consider since education is highly respected and valued in the Vietnamese society. This value placed in education tends to make a Vietnamese a hard-working student with strong competitive attitude placed on grades and rank placement in the classroom. It also places the teacher at a very high level of respect and the student being more sensitive to the teacher's praise or disapproval. In the Vietnamese social order, teacher is only second to the King, even preceding the father (King-teacher-father).

b. Health History of the Student

When a Vietnamese child enters an American school, school administrators often have difficulty in establishing the accurate

record on the child. The following is some information which might be helpful to know.

- Vietnamese Name. Vietnamese names are written in the opposite order of American names. The Vietnamese usually have three names, e.g. Dang Thi Tam, the first name is the family name, while the last name is the given name. Vietnamese use the given name for identification. The discussion in A Manual for Indochinese Refugee Education, 1976-1977 explains this very well.

Surname	Middle Name	Given Name
Nguyen	Hy	Quang (male)
Hoang	Thi	Thauk (female)
Jones	Charles	John
Brown	Patricia	Anne

- Vietnamese Age and Birthdates. Certain confusion might arise from a different concept of age. Usually a Vietnamese has 2 ages, one is related to chronological age and the other is related to Tet or the Lunar New Year. A person who is born prior to the Lunar New Year will be 1 year old on Tet, regardless of whether he/she was born a few days prior to Tet or a whole year prior.

  The determination of birthdates is complicated further by the Vietnamese customs of writing dates in a different order than the Americans. For example:

  6-7-1979: means for a Vietnamese 6th of July 1979
  : while for an American it is June 7, 1979

  To obtain information on the health history of a child, it is advisable to have a person who can speak the language to explain the reason to the parents.

  Cultural factors are involved in the difference in opinion on certain aspects of health conditions relative to the use of medication and treatments, the types of infections, illnesses, etc. which are more common in tropical countries.

  Climate change might be cause for frequent colds or respiratory infections which, in turn, would affect the child's learning ability.

c. Student's Educational Background

The child's previous school experience is an important factor in determining the appropriate grade placement of the child since his/her age level alone could be misleading; especially in the case of Vietnamese children who lived under war conditions.

The present placement of the child is another area to look into with special attention focused on the type of classroom environment, types of services available and provided in the local school, the school climate, the peer group atmosphere, etc. It is also important to secure teachers' comments on the child's performances, behavior, reactions, his/her strengths and weaknesses, and teachers' specific concerns.

2nd Step: The Evaluation

Perhaps a quick summary of the author's day of work in the school may be of some practical use for other co-workers in the field. This does not mean to be a model nor a process for a complete evaluation, but it is simply a sharing of experiences and ideas.

1. Before going to school, background information has been gathered from the teachers regarding their specific concerns. Health information about the child also has been obtained.

2. A quick visit is made to teachers and school administrators to check on any possible change in the student's behavior or performance (negative or positive) since the referral date.

3. The student is followed throughout the school day. Attempt is made to observe the child in as many types of classroom activities as possible. This should include some academic works (math, reading, class discussion), some physical activities (PE, recess, art), and some special classes (ESL, speech, special reading, math, language development, library...). Physical education and recess are most appropriate times to assess the child's motor coordination and also to observe his/her interaction with the peer group. Special classes are observed in order to evaluate the types of services that the local schools provide in order to coordinate any further services that he/she may need.

   In short, notes are taken on concrete observed behaviors, performance, the child's reactions, the peer group relationship, the teacher's attitude toward the child, and his/her own self-perception.

   The specific concerns of the teachers are kept in mind during the observations. For example, if there is a question of emotional problems, the child's reaction to the peer group, the teacher, and the classroom atmosphere is specifically noted. If it is a question of learning difficulty, the child's academic work is assessed by asking such questions as: "What can he/she do in the class? How much did he/she get from the various lessons presented? Is it a language problem or a learning problem?"

4. Noon time is spent with the parents, preferably in their home to learn about the child's background.

5. Some time in the afternoon is spent with the child individually. Informal assessments are performed by having the child do the following: read passages in Vietnamese and in English; compute basic math operations; do free drawings or just talking in order to learn his/her

reasoning ability, expressive language skills and reaction to the new school environment.

6. A short period is for class visit to talk to the group with the goal to give the peer group some understanding of the cultural background of the child and the awareness of his/her special needs.

7. Findings are then compiled with an attempt to evaluate what he/she can and cannot do, and to look beyond his/her immediate reactions for possible underlying causes that may be related to cultural aspects as well as physical, emotional, or academic needs.

8. A "small" school staffing is held with the child's present and past teachers to exchange, compare, and discuss information obtained.

9. A "big" conference is held to discuss findings and to explore possible services and placement. This conference includes <u>all</u> persons involved with the child's education and the family's welfare. Usually, there are local school administrators, school district administrators, teachers, tutors, parents, and sponsors, and, when appropriate, student.

Vietnamese refugee students are a special type of student who often needs special services and special considerations. These services might go beyond the local school authority and services.

<u>3rd Step: Placement</u>

To make decisions on the placement for a child, <u>all</u> aspects of his/her development should be taken into consideration and attempts are made to find the best available solution for his/her needs. Specialized educational services such as bilingual teaching, ESL, learning disability, speech, remedio classes, tutors, teacher aids are considered to help with the cognitive and academic needs of the child. Services of the counselor, social worker, community liaison person, peer group, buddy or community agencies are services that can be provided for his/her emotional needs. Local YMCA is a good place to use as release of excess energy for a refugee child living in a crowded apartment.

Decision is made by all involved, including the parents.

Finding an appropriate placement for a non-English speaking student with special needs is a complex task involving much thought and consideration. The school psychologist's role is that of a facilitator or coordinator of school staff members rather than that of an evaluator or assessor. The following are important points to consider by those responsible for evaluation and placement:

1. A Vietnamese speaking person is needed to interpret the child's responses.

2. The child's age level, past school experiences, current academic performance and social, emotional maturity must be assessed.

3. The grade level assigned must allow the student to move forward academically.

4. Provisions must be made for the learning of English.

5. It should have flexibility provided in the placement to allow changes as needed.

6. Parents' opinions and agreement are important in the placement.

7. There must be a supportive and coordinated effort made by the school staff involved.

III. Some Educational Suggestions

While working with Vietnamese refugee students and families, two main lines of thought come to my mind:

1. Although there is certain commonality in the needs of all refugees, the needs of each individual are definitely different and unique, and should be dealt with in individual cases.

2. The key to success in dealing with refugee needs is to use a comprehensive approach, taking into consideration the "whole person." This should include the social, emotional, as well as the educational aspects. Instructional services such as English lesson is only a part of the total picture.

   To meet the cognitive and academic needs of Vietnamese refugee students in the school, I see more chance of success in educational programs where:

   a. There are provisions to teach English in a well planned, well coordinated educational program.

   b. There is open minded and acceptance attitude among teachers and willingness among administrators to make exceptions and to allow flexibility in the services provided to them.

   c. There is cooperation and coordination of all school staff involved and teaching is a team effort.

   d. There are teachers who are willing to try more than one way to teach.

   e. There are counselors who are willing to go to the students instead of making them go to the office.

   f. There is a close follow-up of the student's progress and allowances for change according to the need.

   - To meet the emotional needs of these students, the important points are patience, understanding, support, and encouragement from the teaching staff, as well as from the peer group and parents.

   - They will need to have the chance to share their cultural heritage such as customs and special holidays.

- They need cultural content instruction about their own culture in order to encourage positive identity formation.

- Refugee children come from a different cultural background and need to learn new ways of behaving, learning, and thinking. They will need opportunities to discuss, examine, and evaluate the conflicting values and norms presented to them by their home and school environment. They will need proper guidance to understand the differences in expectation and values to find a positive balance between the 2 cultures and to be able to make smooth adjustments to their new adopted American society.

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